



20 Foods You Should Never Feed Your Pet

From “What Every Pet Owner Should Know” by Dr. Karen Halligan

1. Bones

Bones are very dangerous for animals. Every year thousands of animals end up in the emergency room from eating bones, usually given by their owners as a treat. The fact is that dogs are omnivores, not carnivores. Most dogs and cats can't tolerate bones, since they can splinter or lodge in the intestinal tract with disastrous results, usually requiring surgery.

Bones can also get stuck in your pet's mouth or throat, which is just as dangerous. Bones of all kinds are bad; this includes pork, chicken, and beef. So the next time you feel the urge to give your dog a bone, just make sure it's a Milk-Bone™ or a Nylabone™. Your pet will love you for it.

2. Ham

Ham and other fatty meats are high in fat, which can lead to a life-threatening pancreatitis. In addition to being high in fat, these foods are very salty and can cause serious stomach upset if eaten by your cats or dogs. Furthermore, large breeds of dogs that eat salty food may drink too much water and develop a potentially fatal condition called bloat. The stomach fills up with gas and within several hours may twist on itself, causing the animal to die. So avoid giving ham and/or rich/salty meats to your pets.

3. Chocolate

A potential lethal dose of chocolate for a 16-pound animal is only two ounces of baker's chocolate or 16 ounces of milk chocolate. Chocolate contains theobromine, which causes increased heart rate, central nervous system stimulation, and constriction of arteries in pets. Clinical symptoms range from vomiting, diarrhea, restlessness, and excitability to cardiac failure, seizures, and death. A serious reaction can occur as quickly as four to six hours after ingestion.

4. Raisins/Grapes

A recent study found that raisins and grapes can lead to gastrointestinal signs like vomiting and diarrhea to life-threatening kidney failure, which starts in about 24 hours after ingestion. Small dogs can also choke on grapes, so it's best to make sure that you provide your pets with a well-balanced diet that's formulated for their life stage.

5. Potato Peel

Potato peels contain oxalates, which adversely affect pets' digestive, nervous, and urinary tract systems. Symptoms include lethargy, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, and seizures.

6. Apple Core/Apricot Pits

The pits and cores of these delicious fruits contain cyanogenic glycosides, which, when eaten by cats or dogs, may result in cyanide poisoning. Signs of toxicity include salivation, apprehension, dilated pupils, difficulty breathing, dizziness, collapse, coma, seizures, hyperventilation, and shock.

7. Alcohol

It doesn't take much alcohol to intoxicate a pet. Animals will stagger and bump into things, hurting themselves; alcohol also causes them to urinate uncontrollably. In high doses, it will suppress the central nervous, respiratory, and cardiac systems, and can even lead to death. It's best to just give your pet water.

8. Moldy Foods

Dogs and cats get food poisoning, like humans, and actually die from eating moldy or spoiled food, which can contain multiple toxins causing vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, shaking, and seizures. Garbage gut is definitely dangerous, so don't feed anything you wouldn't eat to your pets.

9. Avocado

First, avocados are high in fat and can cause your pet stomach upset, vomiting, and even pancreatitis. Second, the pit, besides being toxic, can get lodged in your pet's intestinal tract, leading to a severe blockage that may require surgery. Symptoms of toxicity include difficulty breathing, abdominal enlargement, and abnormal fluid accumulation in the chest and abdomen.

10. Caffeine

Refrain from giving your pets coffee, as caffeine is unsafe for them. It contains methylated xanthine, like chocolate, that stimulates the central nervous and cardiac systems and, within several hours, causes vomiting, restlessness, heart palpitations, and even death. So make sure your pets stay away from that early morning brew.

11. Mushrooms

Mushroom toxicity can be fatal if certain species of mushrooms are ingested. These can contain toxins that may affect multiple systems in your pet's body leading to shock and eventually death. Clinical signs include abdominal pain, seizures, hallucinations, depression, vomiting, and diarrhea.

12. Tuna

A cat's heart muscle requires an amino acid called taurine to maintain normal strength and function. Canned tuna fish does not have this amino acid, and cats that eat too much tuna fish will develop heart problems. If you want to give your cats the taste of tuna that they love, just make sure it's tuna fish for cats, which has the amino acid taurine added.

13. Liver

Eating large amounts of liver can cause vitamin A toxicity, which severely affects muscles and bones. Hypervitaminosis A causes severe changes including constipation, deformed bones, weight loss, anorexia, and neck, joint, or spine stiffness due to excessive bone growth on the elbows and spine.

14. Fat

A pet's consumption of fat trimmings can cause pancreatitis, which leads to vomiting and diarrhea. Pets with pancreatitis are usually lethargic with severe stomach pain, and often become dehydrated. If left untreated, the condition can be fatal.

15. Dough

If ingested, yeast dough will expand in a pet's stomach or intestines and produce large amounts of gas in the digestive system, causing severe pain and even rupture of the stomach or

intestines. Secondly, as the dough ferments it produces alcohol, which can be toxic as well. Symptoms include vomiting, abdominal discomfort, lethargy, or depression.

16. Milk/Cheese

Many pets are lactose-intolerant and develop diarrhea when drinking milk. Pets lack the enzyme that's required to break down milk sugar, and this causes them to develop vomiting, diarrhea, and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Even though your pets like it and were nursed as infants on their mother's milk, refrain from giving them milk. Cheese, even in small amounts, is too high in fat and can lead to a life-threatening pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas).

17. Macadamia nuts

These tasty nuts contain an unknown toxin that can seriously affect a pet's digestive tract, nervous system, and skeletal muscles. Clinical signs include vomiting weakness, depression, diarrhea, panting, difficulty walking, and muscle tremors. Dogs have become violently ill from ingesting as few as six macadamia nuts.

18. Onions/Garlic

Onions and garlic contain toxic ingredients that can damage pets' red blood cells and cause fatal consequences. Pets may develop vomiting and diarrhea, which may progress to anemia, weakness, and labored breathing. Onions, either raw or cooked, are more dangerous; a cat or dog can be seriously harmed by only a small amount. Garlic is less toxic, as pets need to ingest large amounts to cause illness.

19. Tobacco

Tobacco contains nicotine, which rapidly affects the digestive and nervous systems of pets. This may lead to salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, shallow breathing, rapid heartbeat, collapse, coma, and even death.

20. Rhubarb and Tomato leaves/ stems

These plants contain oxalates, which adversely affect multiple systems including the digestive, nervous, and urinary tract systems. Pets will experience vomiting, diarrhea, labored breathing, abdominal cramps, weakness, convulsions, muscle twitching, and seizures from ingesting these.

What To Look For On Your Pet Food Label

- It must meet 'AAFCO' standards
- First few ingredients should be animal protein
- Natural preservatives, vitamins C or E are important
- Make sure food is not expired
- Manufacturer's contact information should be provided