



## Fatal Foods

Keeping our pets healthy and happy is the primary goal of any pet owner. While most people know that chocolate can be poisonous to dogs, there are other potential toxins lurking within our kitchen cupboards that are not as well known. Here is a practical list of some common foods that can cause illness, or worse, in our canine friends.

While the chemical theobromide is responsible for the toxic properties of **chocolate**, caffeine also contributes to its ill-effects. **Caffeine** is not well tolerated in dogs, and can cause hyperactivity and stress on the heart. Therefore, coffee, either liquid, instant or beans, tea bags, and baked goods containing coffee should be kept away from pets. Fruits and vegetables are not completely harmless either. **Grapes**, including dried products like **raisins** and **sultanas**, have been recently found to be quite toxic to dogs, with symptoms ranging from vomiting to acute kidney failure and even death. Please be extra vigilant and keep all raisins and grapes away from your dogs, including those hidden in baked items. Should your pet consume raisins or grapes, it is important you seek veterinary attention as soon as possible. **Onions** and **garlic** can also have adverse effects on dogs, and in some cases can cause damage to blood cells which can lead to anaemia. Many older recipes for dog biscuits call for garlic or onion powder, as dogs enjoy these flavours, but these should be omitted to avoid a possible toxicity. Garlic tablets to ward off fleas should also not be used for the same reason. Certain **artificial sweeteners** have also recently been found to cause severe adverse reaction in dogs. The sweetener xylitol, which can be found in packets to be added to coffee or tea, and some sugar-free sweets and gums, can cause severe low blood sugar in dogs that can lead to seizures and even death. Other products to avoid giving your pets include: macadamia nuts, fatty foods, avocado and foods containing alcoholic beverages.

Should your pet consume any food or product you are unsure of, please contact your veterinary surgery right away. Always keep the package if possible so your vet can determine exactly what your pet has eaten and the best way to help them. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure when it comes to poisonings – and armed with this information we can keep our homes safer for our four-legged friends.

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