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Common Household Foods That May Be Toxic to Dogs and Cats

Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Peaches and Plums:

The seeds of these fruits contain a cyanide compound that would be toxic if the seeds were chewed. Signs to look for are bright red gums, vomiting, rapid breathing, convulsions, and possibly death although a large number of seeds would need to be eaten for this to occur. Another thing to consider about these fruits, is, that if your pet eats Apricot, Peach or Plum pits they may get stuck in the intestinal tract and require surgical removal. Signs of intestinal obstruction include vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, eventually listlessness/depression.

Bread Dough:

This can be toxic for two reasons. First, in the stomach the yeast in the bread dough multiplies due to the warm, humid environment. The dough, and therefore, the stomach then expands which if severe can prevent adequate breathing because the lungs are compressed and adequate blood flow if major vessels are compressed. More significantly, yeast fermentation releases alcohol causing intoxication (drunkness) which if severe can lead to death. If your pet has eaten bread dough watch for a bloated belly, incoordination and disorientation. Some pets will unsuccessfully attempt to vomit. Later they may become depressed, weak, cold, and/or comatose.

Grapes and Raisins:

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center has recently begun investigating reports of kidney failure in dogs as a result of eating grapes, raisins, or grape products (such as those used in wine making.) Often the dog will vomit within a few hours of eating the grapes or raisins. The majority of the time, partially digested grapes or raisins can be seen in the vomit and or the feces. Some dogs stop eating and develop diarrhea. Most dogs become quiet, lethargic and some have abdominal pain. At this time it is unknown if all grapes/raisins are toxic and exactly how much needs to be eaten to be poisonous. If your pet eats a large amount of grapes or even a small amount of raisins please consider bringing them to a veterinarian as soon as possible. If the ingestion occurred recently enough vomiting can be induced potentially removing much of the fruit from the stomach and avoiding possible toxicity.

Macadamia nuts:

In Hawaii signs of toxicity after eating large amounts of Macadamia nuts have been noted although there have not been studies on the toxicity of Macadamia nuts. The most common sign is a rapid onset of weakness especially in the hind end. This will often resolve without treatment, however, if you are concerned about toxicity please bring your pet into a veterinarian.

Onions and possibly Garlic:

An agent in onions reacts with red blood cells causing changes in the cells which lead to anemia (too few red blood cells.) Red blood cells are the part of the blood that carries oxygen around the body. Signs of anemia are pale gums, rapid breathing rate, rapid heart rate, lethargy and weakness. Sometimes vomiting, diarrhea, and bloody urine are seen. Garlic may also cause anemia if eaten for a long time. Other signs that may be seen with garlic are skin inflammation and asthma attacks.