

## Cook's Corner: Not Fit for Canine Consumption

**Not all foods have a place in your dog's homemade diet.**

*Randy Kidd, DVM, Ph.D.*

Dogs seem able to eat lots of stuff that would make us as sick as dogs. A few theories exist to explain dogs' cast-iron stomachs. One reason may be a dog's relatively short gastrointestinal tract, which allows food to pass through quickly, giving toxins less time to affect other body systems. Additionally, carnivore adaptation allows dogs to digest and assimilate foods our bellies would consider awful, and dogs can rapidly pass foods that don't agree with them by vomiting or defecating.

However, dogs are uniquely sensitive to certain foods. When preparing your dog's meals at home, steer clear of the foods and ingredients discussed here.

### Common culprits

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' Animal Poison Control Center reported handling 15,000 cases of pets experiencing toxicity from human foods in 2008, with chocolate being the worst offender. Most owners are aware of the dangers of chocolate toxicity, but some foods that are poisonous to dogs aren't as well-known.

On the do-not-feed list are onions, large amounts of garlic and chives; tomato and potato leaves and stems (the actual tomatoes and potatoes are OK); yeast dough; alcohol; rhubarb leaves; salt and any source of caffeine. How dangerous ingesting each of these is dependent on the amount of toxic agent in the ingredient, the rapidity and amount of ingestion, and the animal's state of health, breed, size and individual sensitivities.

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