

Indulge Yourself, Not Your Dog

The ASPCA wants your dog to be healthy after the holidays.

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There are few things better than gathering with friends and family for the holidays. But while enjoying the festivities, remember the potential hazards that certain goodies can pose to your furry companions, whether they are dogs, puppies, cats or kittens.

To keep your dog happy and healthy during the holiday season, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center offers some helpful hints: Holiday sweets with chocolate are not for dogs or puppies. Depending on the dose ingested, chocolate can be poisonous to animals. In general, the less sweet the chocolate, the more toxic it can be. Vomiting, diarrhea, seizures and hyperactivity can be seen with the ingestion of as little as a quarter-ounce of baking chocolate by a 10-pound dog. Keep your dog on her normal diet. Any change of diet, even for one meal, may give your dog or cat severe indigestion and diarrhea. This is particularly true for older animals who have more delicate digestive systems and nutritional requirements. Candies and gum containing large amounts of the sweetener xylitol can also be toxic to pets, as ingestions of significant quantities can produce a fairly sudden drop in blood sugar, resulting in depression, lack of coordination and seizures. Keep such products well out of the reach of your dog or puppy. Don't give dogs holiday leftovers, and keep them out of the garbage. Poultry bones can splinter and cause blockages. Greasy, spicy and fatty foods can cause stomach upset or worse; spoiled or moldy foods can cause food poisoning. Alcohol and dogs don't mix. Place unattended alcoholic drinks where pets can't reach them. If ingested, your pet could become very sick and weak and may go into a coma, possibly resulting in death from respiratory failure. Keep aluminum foil and cellophane candy wrappers away from pets. They can cause vomiting and intestinal blockage. Protect your dog from the Christmas tree water. The water may contain fertilizers which, if ingested, can cause a stomach upset. Stagnant tree water can also act as a breeding ground for bacteria and your dog could end up with nausea and diarrhea.