



My Pet...Naturally

BEWARE: DOG & CAT POISONS

By Pat McKay

Veterinarian Laurinda Morris wrote about this case that happened in 2004. "This week I had the first case in history of raisin toxicity ever seen at MedVet. My patient was a 56-pound, 5 yr old male neutered lab mix that ate half a canister of raisins sometime between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM on Tuesday. He started with vomiting, diarrhea and shaking about 1AM on Wednesday but the owner didn't call my emergency service until 7AM.

"I had heard somewhere about raisins and grapes causing acute renal failure but hadn't seen any formal paper on the subject. We had her bring the dog in immediately. In the meantime, I called the ER service at MedVet, and the doctor there was like me - had heard something about it, but....

"Anyway, we contacted the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center and they said to give I V fluids at 1 1/2 times maintenance and watch the kidney values for the next 48-72 hours.

"The dog's BUN (blood urea nitrogen level) was already at 32 (normal less than 27) and creatinine over 5 (1.9 is the high end of normal). Both are monitors of kidney function in the bloodstream. We placed an IV catheter and started the fluids. Rechecked the renal values at 5 PM and the BUN was over 40 and creatinine over 7 with no urine production after a liter of fluids. At the point I felt the dog was in acute renal failure and sent him on to MedVet for a urinary catheter to monitor urine output overnight as well as overnight care.

"He started vomiting again overnight at MedVet and his renal values have continued to increase daily. He produced urine when given lasix as a diuretic. He was on 3 different anti-vomiting medications and they still couldn't control his vomiting. Today his urine output decreased again, his BUN was over 120, his creatinine was at 10, his phosphorus was very elevated and his blood pressure, which had been staying around 150, skyrocketed to 220.. He continued to vomit and the owners elected to euthanize.

"This is a very sad case - great dog, great owners who had no idea raisins could be a toxin. Please alert everyone you know who has a dog of this very serious risk. Poison control said as few as 7 raisins or grapes could be toxic.

Grapes & Raisins: Although the toxic substance within grapes and raisins is unknown, these fruits can cause kidney failure. In animals who already have certain health problems, signs may be more dramatic.

Onions & Garlic: They contain disulfides, sulfur compounds that can cause gastrointestinal irritation to animals and harm their red blood cells. "One year at Passover time, I treated a dog with severe anemia," recalls Dr. Hohenhaus. "It turned out she'd eaten too much of Grandma's chopped liver, which was loaded with onions and garlic."

Avocado: The leaves, fruit, seeds and bark of avocados contain persin, which can cause vomiting and diarrhea in dogs. Birds and rodents are especially sensitive to avocado poisoning, and can develop congestion, difficulty breathing and fluid accumulation around the heart. Some ingestions may even be fatal.

Yeast Dough: Yeast dough can rise and cause gas to accumulate in your animal's digestive system. This can be painful and can cause the stomach or intestines to rupture.

Milk: Because dogs and cats do not possess significant amounts of lactase (the enzyme that breaks down lactose in milk), milk and other milk-based products cause them diarrhea or other digestive upset. The only exceptions are colostrums, which is food, and butter, which is fat.

Chocolate, Coffee, Caffeine: These products all contain substances called methylxanthines, which are found in cacao seeds, the fruit of the plant used to make coffee and in the nuts of an extract used in some sodas. When ingested by



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animals, methylxanthines can cause vomiting and diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death.

Xylitol: a sugar substitute, is now known to react as a poison. The study indicated that a 22-pound dog that ingests just a gram of Xylitol should be treated by a veterinarian.

Macadamia Nuts: Dogs have become dramatically ill from ingesting just a handful of Macadamia nuts. The nuts contain an unknown toxin that can upset your animal's digestive tract and muscles, setting off severe weakness, even paralysis, vomiting, and diarrhea. The only good news about these nuts is that virtually all dogs recover with 48 hours of ingestion whether or not they are treated by a vet.

Alcohol: All alcoholic beverages and food products containing alcohol can cause vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, abnormal blood acidity, coma and even death.

Trash: Don't let your dogs and cats get into the trash. There can be all kinds of foods, bones, cleaning products, an endless number of items that can cause serious harm, and may even be fatal.

Liquid Potourri: Cats and dogs have been known to be badly burned while lapping up hot oils and detergents, damaging the animal's mouth, throat, and/or gastrointestinal tract. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center has seen 330 such cases since 2001...most of them involving cats.

Medications: Most animal guardians would not ever leave an open container of medications lying around; however, dogs have been known to open containers by knocking them around or crushing even childproof containers.

Flowering Plants: The ASPCA receives dozens of calls each spring from animal guardians that their cats ate a lily. "Ingesting even very small amounts can result in kidney damage," says Ann Hohenhaus, DVM, chair of the department of medicine at the Animal Medical Center in New York City.

Dogs and cats can also get sick from eating azalea, oleander, or rhododendron, to name a few which can lead to vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness, depression of the central nervous system, and, in rare cases, can be fatal.

Polyurethane Glue: You might never even think that glue would attract your dog, but the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center reports a 309 percent increase in glue-related incidents since 2002. "Dogs see a bottle lying on the floor and think it's a toy," explains Dr. Hanson. Glue, he says, is bad news. "When swallowed, it goes to the stomach, absorbs moisture, and expands to form a large rock-like mass."

Pennies: While an animal can choke on any coin, pennies are particularly dangerous because they are made with zinc, which is toxic to animals. When a penny sits in an animal's stomach, the zinc leaches out into the red blood cells, resulting in severe anemia and kidney problems. The newer the penny, the more likely it is to be deadly. That's because pennies minted after 1982 are 99.2 percent zinc; those minted earlier are only 5 percent zinc.

Pine-Oil Cleaners: Any cleaning product name ending in ...sol is a poison to animals...especially cats. The phenol in these products can cause serious liver damage. Just licking the residue off of their paws can be sufficient to cause kidney damage.

Antifreeze: Every year, by some estimates, about 10,000 dogs and cats are victims of accidental poisoning by automobile antifreeze. The sweet taste of antifreeze attracts animals, but less than a teaspoonful can be fatal. Antifreeze containers that are not tightly sealed or discarded carelessly, spills along the road, and leaks on driveways can pose a threat to animals. Dogs are known to chew through containers to get at antifreeze.

Call your veterinarian or any animal emergency clinic or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435 or

12001 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064



310-477-3030
Toll Free 1-877-4MY-PET1

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National Animal Poison Control Center (800) 548-2423 immediately if you believe your animal has ingested any of the above-mentioned products.

My suggestion is to have Hyland's Upset Stomach (contains the homeopathic remedies Nux Vomica 3X and Carbo Veg 3X) on hand at all times, and you can give one tablet every 10-15 minutes while on your way to emergency care.

Hyland's Upset Stomach is available at My Pet Naturally www.mypetnaturally.com or at almost any homeopathic pharmacy.