

Keeping chocolate out of reach this Christmas



Christmas is a time where chocolate isn't usually in short supply and with it being a very busy season, it's easy to get swept up in the occasion and often forget about leaving advent calendars and chocolate treats lying around, but if your pet does manage to get hold of some chocolate it can endanger their health, sometimes seriously, and even innocent treats can be deadly.

The reason chocolate is poisonous is because it contains a chemical called theobromine and while we usually focus on dogs due to their appetites and their amazing ability to steal food, please note that this chemical is not only poisonous to dogs, but is also poisonous to other animals such as cats, rodents and rabbits.

Although any chocolate should be kept out of reach of your pets, it's important to note that the darker and more expensive chocolate usually contains more theobromine, which can make the fancier chocolate more poisonous. Although white chocolate contains less theobromine and is less likely to cause chocolate poisoning, it's still very fatty and can still make your pet ill.

If any of your pets do eat some chocolate, depending on their size and the amount they've consumed, initial signs and symptoms can be vomiting and diarrhoea. Chocolate is also a stimulant and can lead to your pet to become excitable, as well as developing muscle twitching, tremors, fitting and life threatening problems with their heart and severe cases can be fatal.

Over the Christmas period make sure that all chocolate is out of the reach, this includes chocolate decorations hung from your tree, advent calendars, boxes of chocolate put out on Christmas day, and one that many people forget is the wrapped chocolates under the tree (most pets have a great sense of smell and can easily get into these chocolate treats).

Although chocolate wrappers are not poisonous, they can cause an obstruction in the gut if eaten. This can be very dangerous and may require surgical intervention. Signs of an obstruction may include vomiting, lethargy, your pet being off their food, not defecating or finding it difficult to defecate.

If you think your pet has eaten some chocolate, please [contact us](#) for advice about what to do next.