

CHOCOLATE TOXICITY

Chocolate ingestion by dogs is most common at holiday times when we all have extra goodies about. Prevention is the best way to avoid this danger to our dogs (and extra weight for us).

Chocolate contains methylxanthine alkaloids (primarily theobromine and caffeine). Early signs of chocolate toxicity are vomiting, diarrhea and increased urination. Advanced signs include stiffness, seizures, increased heart rate and eventually cardiac failure, coma, and death.

Fortunately for most dogs, owners do not cook from scratch, but instead from premixed boxes. This is important in that the truly concentrated chocolates are not as common in the household.

Minimum lethal dosages of caffeine and theobromine in dogs range from 100-200 mg/kg. So 1 pound of milk chocolate or 4 ounces of baking chocolate could be lethal for a 16-pound dog.

Below is listed the concentration of caffeine/theobromine in mg/ounce for common products:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Methylxanthine (mg/oz)</u>
Baking chocolate	450
Semi-sweet chocolate,	260
Milk chocolate	60
Hot chocolate	12
White Chocolate	1