



Keep pets away from these 7 sinister Halloween toxins

Know what makes the October holiday truly terrifying? Pets who get into these toxic goodies. Here's what to avoid this Halloween.

Chocolate

Of all candies, chocolate poses the biggest Halloween threat, especially to dogs. Many dogs are attracted to the deep, rich smell of chocolate, making it a significant threat for massive ingestion. The darker and more bitter the chocolate, the more poisonous it is. A single ounce of baker's chocolate can sicken a 50-lb dog. Milk chocolate and white chocolate are less dangerous but should still be kept out of the reach of pets.

Clinical signs can occur one to four hours after the pet eats chocolate and may include vomiting and diarrhea, restlessness, agitation, muscle tremors, seizures and incontinence as well as cardiovascular problems. Large ingestions can result in death.

Candies and other sweets

Large ingestions of sugary, high-fat candy and sweets may lead to inflammation of a pet's pancreas (pancreatitis), but signs—including

reduced or no appetite, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea—may not show up for several days after ingestion.

Also highly toxic to dogs is the sugar substitute xylitol, which is found in many products, from candy to gum to toothpaste and more. Ingestion of products with xylitol can mess with your pet's blood sugar and damage its liver. Signs can include depression, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and potentially death. It's important to note that

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Glow sticks and glow jewelry

Due to their curious nature, cats in particular often chew on glow sticks and jewelry. While not usually life-threatening, the chemical inside can cause mouth pain and irritation as well as hypersalivation and foaming.

Candy wrappers and sticks

When curious pets get into candy, they're in danger of a life-threatening bowel obstruction

from lodged foil and cellophane wrappers, sticks and other Halloween packaging pieces. Signs to watch for include vomiting, decreased appetite, not defecating, straining to defecate and lethargy.

Costumes

Many people dress up their pets for parties and other special events, but ingestion of metallic beads, snaps or other small pieces of those costumes—especially those that contain zinc or lead—can result in serious poisoning.

Batteries

Every Halloween, there's a spike in the number of pets swallowing or chewing on batteries. Both dry-cell batteries (acid or alkaline) and lithium disc batteries are toxic, but for different reasons.

When dry cell batteries are chewed and the casing breaks, material can leak from the battery and harm exposed tissues.

Lithium disc batteries don't contain corrosive material but are considered more harmful than dry cell batteries. Smaller lithium disk batteries are especially problematic, as they tend to stick in the esophagus and generate an electric current between mucosal tissues resulting in severe tissue damage and potential perforation. One small 3-volt lithium disc battery lodged in the esophagus can kill tissue in as little as 15 minutes. Metals such as lead, mercury, zinc and cobalt may be present in the casings, and heavy metal toxicity may occur if batteries or pieces remain in the gastrointestinal tract for longer than a few days.

This Halloween, please help keep pets safe. The veterinary toxicology experts at Pet Poison Helpline suggest that it's always easier, less expensive and safer for a pet to be treated earlier versus when it's showing severe signs. If your pet has eaten any of the items included here, call your veterinarian or a service like Pet Poison Helpline immediately. **dvm360**

other sugar-free products—such as aspartame, maltitol and sorbitol—do not result in a massive insulin release like xylitol does.

Raisins

Mini boxes of raisins can be a healthy treat for trick-or-treaters, but they're extremely poisonous to dogs. Raisins are so dangerous that they deserve the same dog-proofing treatment as chocolate and xylitol: Never feed to dogs, store in secure containers and keep well out of dogs' reach.

The toxin associated with raisin poisoning hasn't been identified, so treatment after ingestion can be frustrating. Some dogs show no signs at all after eating raisins, and some develop acute kidney injury. Vomiting, often of whole or partially digested raisins, is the most consistent sign of poisoning, followed by reduced or no appetite, lethargy, dehydration and death.



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