



WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG EATS CHOCOLATE

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Liz Donovan, AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
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Chocolate is toxic to dogs and depending on the type and amount of chocolate consumed and the weight of your dog, it could cause a serious medical emergency. That said, if your dog ate a small amount of milk chocolate, you don't necessarily need to panic. Learn how much is too much, which types of chocolate are the most dangerous, and what signs to look for that may signal your dog needs treatment.

WHY CHOCOLATE IS TOXIC TO DOGS

Chocolate contains both theobromine and [caffeine](#), both which can speed the heart rate and stimulate the nervous system of dogs, the [Merck/Merial Manual for Veterinary Health](#) explains. The risk of your dog becoming sick from ingesting chocolate depends on the type and amount of chocolate consumed and the weight of the dog ([calculate your dog's risk of toxicity with this easy-to-use program](#)). The concentrations of these toxic substances [varies among different types of chocolates](#). Here are a few types of chocolate listed in order of theobromine content:

1. Cocoa powder (most toxic)
2. Unsweetened baker's chocolate
3. Semisweet chocolate
4. Dark chocolate
5. Milk chocolate
6. White chocolate (not very toxic)

Although a few Hersey kisses are unlikely to affect a medium-sized dog, if you know your dog has eaten chocolate, it's important to monitor him for signs of toxicity (see below), and it's recommended that you contact your veterinarian or the [Pet Poison Helpline](#) (855-213-6680, fee applies) for advice.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF CHOCOLATE POISONING?

Signs of chocolate poisoning usually appear within 6 to 12 hours after your dog has eaten it, may last up to 72 hours, and include the following:

- [Vomiting](#)
- [Diarrhea](#)
- Restlessness
- Increased urination
- Tremors

- Elevated or abnormal heart rate
- [Seizures](#)
- Collapse and death

Note: Older dogs and dogs with heart conditions are more at risk of sudden death from chocolate poisoning.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG ATE CHOCOLATE

If you believe your dog ate chocolate, **call your veterinarian immediately** and/or call the Pet Poison Helpline (855-213-6680) for advice. Based on your dog's size and the amount and type of chocolate consumed, your veterinarian may recommend that you [simply monitor him](#) for the clinical signs listed above and call back if his condition worsens.

In other cases, the veterinarian may prefer you bring the dog into the clinic. If your pet consumed the chocolate less than two hours ago, your veterinarian may induce vomiting and give him several doses of activated charcoal, which works to move the toxins out of the body without being absorbed into the bloodstream. For more severe cases, veterinary intervention may be needed to provide supplemental treatment, such as medications or IV fluids, to resolve the effects of the poisoning. Dogs suffering from seizures may need to be monitored at the clinic overnight.

HOW TO PREVENT YOUR DOG FROM EATING CHOCOLATE

Even though small amounts of milk chocolate may not cause a problem in larger dogs, it's still not recommended that pet owners offer their dog chocolate [as a treat](#). To prevent your dog from sneaking chocolate, follow these tips:

Put it away: Make sure all chocolate items, including cocoa powder and hot chocolate mix, are stored where the dog cannot reach them, such as on a high shelf in a closed-door pantry. Remind your children and guests that

chocolate should be kept out of the dog's reach and [not left on countertops](#), tables, or in purses. Keep this in mind during the holidays, too, making sure to place [trick-or-treat bags](#), Easter baskets, Christmas stockings, and Hanukkah coins (gelt), for example, in a place where a dog cannot get to them.

Teach “leave it”: The command “leave it” is extremely effective in preventing dogs from eating something that falls onto the ground or is left within reach during a walk. It's also a very easy command to teach. [Click here for instructions](#) from the [AKC GoodDog! Helpline](#) on how to train your dog to "leave it."

[Crate train your dog:](#) The safest way to ensure your dog doesn't eat anything harmful while you're not supervising him is to [crate train](#) him. [Find a sturdy crate](#) that is large enough for your dog to stand up and turn around and make it a comfortable, safe place for him to retreat to when he wants to be alone or when you can't watch him. Offer toys, [a stuffed Kong](#), a favorite blanket, [and treats](#) to help him feel like the crate is his personal den. Get more tips on crate-training a dog by downloading the complimentary e-book below.