

Chocolate Toxicity

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Overview

Chocolate, in addition to having a high fat content, contains caffeine and theobromine. These two compounds are nervous system stimulants and can be toxic in high amounts. The levels of caffeine and theobromine vary between different types of chocolate. For example, white chocolate has the lowest concentration of stimulants and baking chocolate or cacao beans have the highest concentration.

Depending on the type of chocolate ingested and the amount eaten, various problems can occur. The high fat content in chocolate may result in vomiting and possibly diarrhea. Once toxic levels are eaten, the stimulant effect becomes apparent. Restlessness, hyperactivity, and possibly excessive panting may be seen. Heart rate and blood pressure levels may also be increased. Seizure activity may occur in severe cases.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Chocolate toxicity is generally diagnosed by a thorough history of chocolate exposure and physical examination.
- Treatment depends on the type and amount of chocolate ingested, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets receiving minor amounts of chocolate may not be treated. Pets ingesting toxic amounts of chocolate are treated with fluids, medications for vomiting and sedatives. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Hyperactivity
- Restlessness
- Panting

- Seizure activity

Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!