

Top Ten Feeding Faux Paws

10. **Chocolate**
Chocolate contains methylxanthines (caffeine and theobromines) to which dogs are very sensitive. Depending on the dose, these can cause mild gastrointestinal (GI) upset, vomiting and diarrhea or severe tachycardia (fast heart rate), seizures and even death. The amount of these toxins varies with the type of chocolate – unsweetened, baking chocolate contains more than 7 times that of milk chocolate, whereas white chocolate contains almost none. Beware, certain types of cocoa mulch (which attracts dogs with its chocolate scent) contain enough methylxanthines to kill dogs.
9. **Onions**
A disulfide toxin in onions and onion powder causes oxidative damage and destruction of red blood cells in cats and dogs. Ingestion can result in hemolytic anemia and secondary kidney failure. Many commercial baby foods, especially those with vegetables or rice, contain onion powder and, therefore, should never be fed to pets.
8. **Meat**
Ham, bacon, bologna, hot dogs, pork and other fatty meats (even steak with the fat cut away) can cause life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas and GI tract. This is most obvious during the holidays when people tend to share the bounty on their dinner tables with their pets, essentially, killing them with kindness.
7. **Bones**
Bones can splinter and perforate the esophagus, stomach and intestines, as well as form a foreign body obstruction in the GI tract. The chewing of bones can also fracture teeth, causing severe pain.
6. **Grapes and raisins**
Toxic compounds found in the skin of grapes and raisins can damage kidneys and cause kidney failure. Ingesting any amount is potentially dangerous.
5. **Xylitol**
Dogs are especially sensitive to this sugar-free sweetener found in many chewing gums, muffins and candy. Death can result from severe low blood sugar, bleeding disorders and liver failure after eating just one piece of gum.
4. **Moldy foods**
Moldy bread and other foods contain tremorgenic mycotoxins. Dogs and cats that eat them can suffer from muscle twitches, ataxia and even convulsions that last for days.
3. **Macadamia nuts**
Dogs that ingest macadamia nuts can become weak, ataxic, febrile and also have seizures. The exact mechanism of intoxication is unknown.
2. **Bread dough**
Rising bread dough releases ethanol and expands several times its original size after ingestion. This can cause ethanol toxicity and severe distention of the abdomen with possible foreign body obstruction of the GI tract.
1. **Overfeeding**
Overfeeding results in obesity, premature aging and shortened life spans. More than 50% of American pets are overweight and suffer from early-onset arthritis, heart disease, diabetes and liver failure.