

## Chocolate Toxicity in Dogs

Just like us, dogs love the taste of chocolate however this is one treat you simply can't afford to give to them.

This is because it contains **Theobromine** which is highly toxic to dogs and other animals.

It also contains caffeine which is also toxic at specific levels.

Dogs are more commonly prone to chocolate toxicity because of their ability to seek out and find hidden chocolates. Also because many people, especially children are unaware of its dangerous side effects it is sometimes innocently offered as a treat.

### Are some chocolates more toxic than others?

Yes. The darker the chocolate the more Theobromine it contains. Dark chocolate contains 8 -10 times more Theobromine than milk chocolate.

### How much is too much?

The toxic dose of Theobromine and caffeine for pets is 100 – 200mg per kg of body weight however side effects can be seen at much lower levels such as **20mg/kg**.

### How does this translate?

Dark chocolate or Baker's chocolate contains around 390 – 450 mg Theobromine per oz.

This means 13.8 – 15.9mg of Theobromine **per gram** of dark chocolate.

Given the **toxic** dose of around 100mg per kg of body weight it means that a 10kg dog would only need to eat only 72grams of dark chocolate to receive a **Toxic** dose of Theobromine. This is the equivalent of about a third of a 250g block of dark chocolate.

Milk chocolate contains around 44 – 60mg of Theobromine per oz so a dog would need to ingest about 9 times this amount of milk chocolate to reach this toxic dose.

**BE WARNED: - Harmful effects can be seen at much lower levels than these – as low as 20mg/kg – so one fifth of the quantities described above!**

### What are the side effects of Chocolate Toxicity?

Signs usually develop around 6 - 12 hours of ingestion and may include:

- Restlessness / excitement / nervousness / trembling
- Vomiting / diarrhoea
- Increased drinking / urinating

### Progressive signs:

- Tremors
- Seizures

So if you suspect your dog has eaten more than just a few stray M & M's and is showing any of the above symptoms, take him to your vet for supportive treatment straight away.