



Doggie Dangers At-a-Glance

by Ava Schutzman

Since adopting my cocker spaniel Taffy from CSRNE, I've learned some good, bad, incomplete, and actually terrifying information about what can happen to dogs. Keeping your dog safe from harm can sometimes be a challenge, but it's a necessity for the loving adoptive dog parent. Some reading and a deeper understanding of the issues involved can prepare you to appropriately respond to accidents and other dangers. This article provides an overview of these hazards as well as pointers to more information.

It's also important to understand the potential degree of harm to your dog. A short bout with diarrhea may be unpleasant for the one who cleans it up, but will not require an immediate trip to the vet for emergency stomach-pumping to save a dog's life.

Some of these dangers are not indigenous to New England, so I only learned of them as I traveled and recently became a snowbird. You may need to know these things on vacation!

In most cases of toxicosis, you should seek veterinary help, fast! Immediate medical attention (induction of vomiting, administration of activated charcoal to absorb the toxin, fluid therapy) is often the line between a good versus bad outcome.

Not on the chart, but still important, is that keeping your dog's weight within a healthy range (your vet can suggest one for your dog) will, just as for humans, decrease the risk of developing diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

The 4-page chart below summarizes dangers, shows some likely outcomes, and suggests what to do. Not all categories contain every possible hazard, but I've included as many examples as I could find. Not all spots are filled in – I did not find specific impacts for every danger. It is sufficient to alert you to the fact that the item may be dangerous if it's on the list in the left-most column. This list is not complete and may not be accurate. I should also state for the record that I am not a veterinarian, have no medical training, and have never played a veterinarian on TV. Bottom line: Always consult your vet!

Sources for this information include articles at these online links, along with several tips from my vet.

American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA)

<http://www.amva.org>

American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

excellent articles online re: poison control in Pet Care section

<http://www.aspca.org/>

ASPCA Poison Control Center 24-hour Hotline: **888-426-4435** – fee for usage but it's worth it!

Vendor Websites, e.g., [Novartis PetWellness](#) - check your own vendors' sites – food, medication, etc.

<http://www.petwellness.com>

[The Doctors' Information Center for Dogs](#) – Drs. Foster & Smith website, URL below -- articles

[PetHealth101](#) sponsored by 1-800-PetMeds – <http://www.pethealth101.com>

Don't miss these other articles on CSRNE's Website

- Diseases & Parasites
- First Aid
- Heartworm Disease
- Keeping Your Cocker Safe
- Ticks & Lyme Disease

Some sources of non-prescription pet medications:

- Drs. Foster & Smith <http://www.drsfostersmith.com/>
- 1-800-Pet-Meds <http://www.1800petmeds.com/>
- Petco and PetSmart – e.g., pet superstores



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<i>Source of Danger</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>	<i>What to Do</i>
HUMAN FOODS	Upset stomach to toxic overdose, depending on quantity consumed.	Seek veterinary help immediately for dangerous situations.
- Chocolate (All forms: Cocoa powder, cooking chocolate, dark chocolate, milk chocolate) Contains lethal alkaloids: theobromine, a compound that is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic, and caffeine.	Small amounts: OK to upset stomach. For a 25 lb. Cocker, 4 oz. or more of dark chocolate can cause death if untreated. Dog may pass large volumes of urine and will be unusually thirsty. Vomiting and diarrhea are common. Increased heart rate or irregular heartbeat. The signs of sickness may not be seen for several hours, with death following within 24 hours.	Go to vet immediately if large quantity has been ingested. Call if you are not sure.
- Onions, Salt, Garlic Toxic ingredient in onion is thiosulphate.	Vomiting, diarrhea, leading to hemolytic anemia (breakdown of red blood cells). Breathlessness. Symptoms and poisoning occurs a <i>few days after</i> onion is ingested.	
- Macadamia Nuts	As few as 6 nuts can cause locomotory difficulties: a tremor of the skeletal muscles, and weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters.	
- Fruit Pips & Pits: Pear pips, the kernels of plums, peaches and apricots, apple core pips (contain cyanogenic glycosides)	Can result in cyanide poisoning.	
- Grapes & Raisins	Large amounts of grapes (an entire bunch or more) can be toxic leading to kidney failure. Small amounts of raisins (even 2-3) can cause diarrhea.	
- Vegetable leaves/skin: Avocado, Potato peelings, Rhubarb leaves, Tomato leaves & stems (green parts); large amounts of Broccoli.	Rhubarb leaves can cause kidney failure.	
- Yeast Dough	Expands causing bloat and shock symptoms, and the yeast ferments into alcohol, causing ethanol toxicosis.	
- Fatty, Rich, or Spicy Foods	Can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and inflammation of the pancreas.	
- Play Dough	The salt content in homemade versions cause vomiting, seizures, fever (also increased water consumption, tremors, diarrhea)	
- Moldy or spoiled foods	Can lead to food poisoning	Keep garbage bags away from dog
STIMULANTS	Can lead to food poisoning	Call or visit Vet
- Cigarettes, Cigars, Tobacco		
- Alcohol, Yeast dough, Hops	Yeast ferments into alcohol, causing ethanol toxicosis.	
- Coffee grounds, beans, tea (caffeine)		
- Chewing gum, candy and breath fresheners containing xylitol		



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<i>Source of Danger</i>	<i>Possible Outcomes</i>	<i>What to Do</i>
DOG TREATS	Not always as safe as you would assume.	Get to vet if you are in doubt!
- Beef, pork bones	Choking or perforation of internal organs, or blockages	
- Poultry bones	Can splinter and cause damage to dog's mouth or esophagus	
- Rawhide	Too much rawhide at once can cause diarrhea. Rawhide is digestible- it is essentially dried skin; however, large pieces do not fully digest or soften before trying to pass or larger pieces get stuck in the stomach causing the dreaded foreign body obstruction.	Supervise dog while he chews it; remove pieces that are large but can be swallowed and could get stuck inside dog.
PLANTS Common Household Plants – this is NOT an exhaustive list.	Poisoning	Call or visit Vet (or Poison Control Center for instruction).
- Lillies, Oleander, Azalea, Yew, Foxglove, Rhododendron and Lalanchoe	May cause heart problems if ingested.	
- Tulip & other bulbs, Marijuana		
- Sago palms (Cycad species)	Can cause liver damage, especially if the nut portion of the plant is consumed	
- Philodendron, Corn plant, Castor bean, Mother-in-law's tongue, Hibiscus and Hydrangea, Cyclamen root, Bird of Paradise, Jasmine, Dieffenbachia, Larkspur/Delphinium, Laurel, Prunus species	May cause nervous system damage.	
- Shamrock	Can cause kidney failure	
- Holly, Mistletoe	May be toxic if consumed	Merry Xmas but keep these away from the dog!
- Poinsettia	May cause upset stomach if consumed	Merry Xmas but keep these away from the dog!
- Wild Foxtails and other weeds found in S/W U.S. - Summer seasonal problem	Cause inflamed, painful infected lump anywhere on or inside body	Seeds must be removed, even surgically – call your vet.
- Wild Poisonous Mushrooms	Symptoms of mushroom poisoning can range from mild vomiting and diarrhea to severe digestive problems to complete liver failure.	If you catch the dog in the act, remove any pieces from the dog's mouth, and: Induce vomiting with either - Syrup of ipecac (1 teaspoonful per 10 pounds of body weight), or Hydrogen Peroxide 3% - 1 tablespoon every 10 minutes, repeat 3 times. Call your veterinarian or take dog to an emergency vet hospital immediately.



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ANIMALS		
- Certain species of mostly nocturnal giant/cane toads – found in South & West U.S. – secrete a toxic substance when threatened.	Death can occur within 15 minutes.	Immediately flush out dog's mouth (teeth and gums) with water (be sure to point hose out of mouth, not into) and rush dog to the vet.
- Snakes, small reptiles	Dog may chase/kill these and get sick from ingesting them. Some snake venom can cause kidney failure.	
- Squirrels, skunks, foxes, raccoons, bats	Rabies, Canine Distemper	Preventive Vaccination
INSECTS & PARASITES	<u>Discomfort</u> <u>Disease</u>	Preventive Medications (from vet)
- Mosquitoes	Heartworm West Nile Virus	Interceptor, Heartgard
- Fleas	Itching Fleas in large numbers cause anemia (they feed on blood meals which can deplete a small animal fairly quickly- common in puppies and kittens)	Frontline, Advantage, Capstar, etc.
- Ticks (there are at least 5 types in the U.S. at different seasons)	Lyme Disease (deer ticks – the tiny ticks), Spotted Rocky Mountain Fever	Preventive medications: Frontline, K-9 Advantix, BioSpot
- Mites	Itching, inflamed ears	Flush ears with solution regularly.
- Bee stings	Can lead to kidney failure.	Keep a canine first aid kit handy.
- Spiders (Black widow)	Toxic	Call or go to vet immediately.
HUMAN MEDICATIONS & COSMETICS	With any human medication consumption, the first thing to do is call poison control and then the vet. Vets usually do not know what most prescription drugs will do to a pet and poison control has that info. After the owner gives them their info, they give the client a case number- this allows the treating vet to call and get the treatment without paying twice.	Call Poison Control and then the Vet.
- Acetaminophen	Intense irritation of the intestines and a loss of appetite.	
- Aspirin	Gastric ulceration to being lethal.	Canine aspirin, e.g., Vetrin.
- Ibuprofen	Can cause kidney failure.	Anti-inflammatories and arthritis medications for dogs
- Cold medicines, some Antibiotics		
- Vitamins		
- Diet Pills, Antidepressants		
- Hand soaps, Toothpaste and Sun blocks	Can cause stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea	



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CHEMICALS		Preventative: Keep the dog out of the garage and away from the car. If dog licks or drinks any chemical -- Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Antifreeze (ethylene glycol is most dangerous)	Stupor, swaggering, weaving, listlessness, frequent urination, excess thirst or vomiting – can kill if untreated. Can lead to kidney failure.	Use safer propylene glycol antifreeze instead. Don't let dog loose in the garage! Even the dog licking the floor is dangerous. Watch carefully while walking in the street. Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Gasoline, kerosene, fuel oils	Can lead to kidney failure.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Ice melting products	Can cause upset stomach if ingested.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Household Cleaning Products	Can be toxic to dogs if ingested.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- containing Bleach - Mothballs (naphthalene) - Fabric softener sheets		Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Insecticides/Rodenticides	Most rodenticides cause seizures or bleeding tendencies.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Paints & Solvents	Paint thinners, mineral spirits, and other solvents are dangerous and can cause severe irritation or chemical burns if swallowed or if they come in contact with your pet's skin.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Alkaline batteries		Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
- Pennies	Contain harmful copper and zinc, can be swallowed.	Get dog to vet <i>immediately</i> .
ENVIRONMENT		
- Smoke	Dog will shake, be fearful. Smoke fumes can be toxic.	Tie dog up outside until smoke inside house clears.
- Gas leaking from stove or heater	Gas fumes can be toxic.	
- Fireworks, loud noises, Thunderstorms	Dog will be fearful, shake.	Leave dog at home on July 4 th !
- Leaving dog inside a locked car when temp is over 70 degrees outside - or when freezing in winter	Being trapped in a car on a hot day causes "heat stroke." Would YOU want to be in that freezing car for long?	Don't do it!
- Electrical cords around the house	Electrical shock or electrocution	If your dog is a "chewer" - keep these away from him! Use protective covers on cords.
- Christmas tree water treated with fertilizers	If ingested, could lead to nausea, vomiting or diarrhea	
ACCIDENTS	Serious injury to dog	Keep a canine first aid kit handy, learn how to use it. Keep heavy items off top shelves, etc. so they can't fall onto dog. Go to vet <i>immediately</i> if serious.