

## Chocolate Poisoning

Why is chocolate poisonous to dogs? The culprit is a compound called theobromine, which is absorbed in the bloodstream and causes cardiac, kidney and neurological dysfunction in dogs.

Chocolate consumption symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting and hyperactivity will reveal themselves between 4 and 24 hours.

Symptoms of chocolate poisoning

- Increased heart rate (which can cause arrhythmia)
- Muscle twitching
- Increased urination and excessive panting (which may lead to hyperthermia)
- Muscle tremors/seizures
- Coma and potentially, death

**DID YOU KNOW:** Due to the concentration of Theobromine in dark chocolate, toxicity is up to four times more severe in dark chocolate than it is in milk chocolate?

If your dog consumes chocolate

- Contact your vet immediately
- Write down and tell your vet the quantity of chocolate eaten.
- Name the location and time when your dog ate the chocolate. Be specific about the type of chocolate your dog has eaten (show the vet chocolate wrappers or box if you can so that they can see the ingredients.)



Treatment for chocolate poisoning

With no antidote to theobromine available, your vet will most likely induce vomiting. This could include flushing out your dog's stomach and feeding activated charcoal to absorb any residual toxins. Other possible treatments might also include intravenous fluids and heart, blood pressure and seizure medication.

If you are unable to access immediate veterinary help, you can use syrup of Ipecac, a vomiting agent found at the chemist or make up a solution of strong salt water and force it in to the dog orally. A small handful of plain washing soda crystals (eg electric soda) straight down the hatch can also be used to induce vomiting within minutes.

Chocolate ingestion can cause significant stress on your dog's system but prompt intervention and treatment results in a positive prognosis for poisoned dogs - even in cases where a large amount of chocolate has been ingested.

[www.ivdd.org.au](http://www.ivdd.org.au)

### Disclaimer

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