

Holiday Reminder: Dangerous Foods Not To Feed Your Pets

Don't Let Pets Lick Their Chops Over These Leftovers?" By Brandi Fowler

(Pet Pulse Photo Illustration by Mike Lloyd)
June 23, 2008

LOS ANGELES -- Sizzling marinated steaks, chili dogs topped with onions, a big piece of chocolate cake. As Americans prepare for summer holidays and celebrations, they may want to think twice about giving their dogs these scraps from the grill and the dinner table. As it turns out, these meals can send them to the emergency room and in some cases, even kill them.

"My colleague's neighbor gave his dog hot dogs off the grill and the dog was in the hospital for a day," Susan Blake Davis, a Dana Point, California veterinary nutritionist said.

Contrary to popular belief, all foods that people eat are not safe for pets to consume, Davis said. Grapes, raisins and chocolate are especially toxic to dogs. A single serving of raisins could kill them. Pet owners should make sure that food is out of reach for pets, especially when they are away from home.

"One pet owner had just come back from a trip and had a couple boxes of chocolate coins. They left the box open and went to work. When they came back, they realized that the wrappers were laying around," Davis said.

The owners rushed their dog to the emergency room and used charcoal and induced vomiting to get it out of his system. "The pet lived but it was a very dangerous situation."

Pet owners should also refrain from giving pets food high in fat such as cheeseburgers and French fries, which can lead to pancreatitis when consumed regularly and in large quantities, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"The most common thing people tend to do during the holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas is give the dog and cat scraps off the table, like gravy," Davis said. "Those scraps have a lot of fat in it. The same way it's not good for us, it's not good for them either."

Since 60 percent of pets are obese in America, Davis said, she recommends that clients give their pets healthy and safe people food, like brown rice, lean chicken breasts, oatmeal and baby carrots. That will prevent health issues like joint problems, cancer and kidney failure associated with pet obesity.

Healthy people food snacks for pets also include sweet potatoes.

"There's a treat I love called wild side salmon treats," Davis said. "They're literally just freeze-dried wild salmon. If you want to give a pet a treat, they come in tiny bite size treats."

Excessive treat giving can put on a lot of weight, so Davis recommends these snacks to her clients.

"People tend to want to treat their pets the way they want to be treated and they shouldn't," Davis said. "You need to use common sense when treating your pets."

Consult a pet nutritionist if you're confused about what to give your pets. Davis recommends books "Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats," and Dr. Henry Pasternak's "Healing Pets as Nature's Miracle Cure," to pet owners interested in pet nutrition.

Any pet that eats a known toxin should be rushed to the animal emergency room, Davis said. If you're not sure what foods are toxic for pets, log on to ASPAC's Web site at aspca.org.