

# Did you know that chocolate can be toxic to dogs and cats?

*courtesy of Animal Info Publications*

**Author:** Sarah McMullen

The ingredient that makes chocolate toxic to animals is theobromine, a xanthine compound. Theobromine is present in cocoa products. Cooking or dark chocolate contains the highest amount, followed by semi sweet chocolate & milk chocolate has the least amount.

Xanthine compounds affect the central nervous system, the cardiovascular system and the peripheral nerves.

Signs of toxicity can include panting, restlessness, vomiting, increased urination and muscular tremors or tenseness. The animal may also become 'hyper' irritable or excitable. These signs may lead to hyperthermia (over heating). Serious complications such as seizures, heart failure and death can also occur.

Minor problems can still occur with eating milk chocolate or small amounts of other human chocolates & the most common would be diarrhoea (usually 12-24 hours after eating the chocolate).

If you suspect chocolate poisoning it is important to contact your vet for immediate advice.

Do not give chocolate to your dog or cat unless it is the 'choc treat' style safe for pets.

