



Whilst there is much to look forward to over the festive period, it's important to be aware of the increased risks if bounties of tempting food stuffs are left within reach of our pets. We should also be mindful of the additional decorations including candles, wrapping paper and packets of silica gel (often found in the packaging for new handbags, shoes or cameras); these all have potential as choking hazards or the ability to cause obstruction in our pets.

"Poisonous Plants"

There is no substantive case data to link **holly berries** to death in dogs, and the **ivy** used in wreaths and decorations is not the "poison ivy" we all are warned to avoid. However, ingestion of either would usually only lead to drooling, retching or vomiting. However, rabbits are more susceptible to ivy and this can cause twitching, paralysis or even death.

Mistletoe - ingestion seems to result in retching and salivation and occasionally weakness.

Poinsettia - This has a bad reputation and, while reported to be very toxic in cats, gastric irritation is the usual result if ingested.

Fallen needles from Christmas trees have the potential to cause injury if swallowed, so a regular tidy under the tree is advised. Take preventative measures to minimise any risk.

"Food Poisons"

Chocolate poisoning is one of the most common enquiries received by the Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS). It's the theobromine in chocolate which is toxic to dogs. It is toxic to other species too, but there is currently insufficient data available to determine what quantity might be toxic to cats, rodents and rabbits. Treatment is largely supportive with particular emphasis on rehydration reducing the stimulant effects with sedatives and monitoring vital signs.

Grapes, Raisins, Sultanas and Currants (and therefore Christmas cake) can lead to renal failure in dogs. However, some dogs seem to manage large quantities without any effect while others develop renal failure after as little as a small handful of raisins or a few grapes. Some dogs may initially develop vomiting and diarrhoea and develop renal failure 24-72 hours post ingestion. If you suspect ingestion, then call us immediately. It is possible that cats are also susceptible; the VPIS has received 2 reports of renal failure.

Peanuts have been reported to cause adverse effects in some pets showing as gastrointestinal problems, while **macadamia nuts** are also toxic and cause vomiting, depression, tremors, lameness and ataxia.

Xylitol, an artificial sweetener, found in some chewing gum and used to sweeten home cooking can cause hypoglycaemia and liver failure in dogs.

The *Allium* species which includes onions, **garlic, leeks, shallots** and **chives** can cause toxicity, even when cooked.



If you are in any doubt then call us immediately on 01666 823165