

# **National Poison Prevention Week**

## **March 18 - 24**

National Poison Prevention Week is only 1 week per year, but poison safety is important all year long! Every year, thousands of pets suffer and many die because of accidental ingestion of toxic substances. Pet owners, did you know that many of these substances are in common products you have around the house right now?

### **Xylitol**

Xylitol is a sugar-substitute used in many products, including sugar-free gum and mints, chewable vitamins, oral-care products and baked goods. While xylitol is considered safe for people, it has recently been recognized as a potentially lethal substance for dogs. It has been known for some time that xylitol is a cause of hypoglycemia (abnormally low level of sugar in the blood) in dogs, but a recent study has found it to also cause serious liver damage. According to an article published in the December, 2006 issue of Veterinary Medicine, the APCC (Animal Poison Control Center) reviewed its records from 2003 to 2005 and discovered at least 8 cases of dogs that had developed liver failure and blood clotting disorders after ingesting xylitol.

With the number of products containing xylitol on the rise due to carb-free dieting, owners that are watching their sugar intake also need to ensure their dogs aren't consuming products or foods containing xylitol.

### **Grapes and Raisins**

According to the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) a disturbing trend began to emerge from the AnTox database used by its Animal Control Center around 1989: nearly all dogs that had ingested grapes or raisins had developed acute kidney failure. The cases reported were from all over the United States, with the amount consumed varying from a pound of grapes to as little as a single serving of raisins. The AnTox database also showed that most of these dogs began vomiting within a few hours of ingestion. Other signs that were noted were diarrhea, lethargy and excessive drinking. Once owners sought medical attention, blood tests consistently showed kidney damage in these dogs. In most cases, despite medical efforts to reverse the damage to the kidneys, many dogs did not survive.

Many dogs love to eat anything their owner does, so be careful not to leave grapes or raisins within your faithful friend's reach.

### **Other foods that are inappropriate for pets**

Food items that could harm your pet include:

- onions and onion powder (in some baby foods)
- chocolate (bakers, semi sweet, milk, dark) and coco bean shells (used for landscaping)
- yeast dough
- coffee (grounds, beans)
- salt
- macadamia nuts
- rhubarb leaves
- alcoholic beverages (including hops used in home beer brewing)
- tomato leaves and stems