

Press release

15th April 2011

Forget the Easter treats – look out for the Easter threats!

Every year our homes are over run with chocolate eggs at Easter time. With an estimated eight million dogs in the UK, there will be a few drooling mouths as you tuck into your Easter treats. You may well think; what harm would a few cubes of chocolate do to your furry friend?

Actually, more than you'd realise. This could be seriously damaging to your pets health.

Research has found that giving dogs and cats human chocolate they cannot digest can make them feel very unwell.

Hanne Grice, dog expert and founder of Walk the Dog™ says: "We think we're giving our pet dog a nice treat when we offer them a cube of chocolate, but research has found that chocolate contains a compound called xanthines. Ingestion of chocolate can cause muscle tremors, difficulty in breathing, irregular heartbeats and in some cases it can be fatal! It's at this time of year that this becomes more possible because there is typically so much chocolate available in the house."

And it's not just the chocolate you need to be wary of when it comes to your four legged friends. Whether it's the Sunday roast or the Easter meal, most owners like to give their pet the odd titbit, so they feel included. However, there are a number of dangers for dogs that can lurk within our meals, which Hanne has highlighted below...

Dangerous dinners

Leftovers from the Easter as meal, such as **chicken or turkey** bones shouldn't be given to your pet. Bones can splinter easily causing damage to the intestine and can cause choking if they get stuck in your pet's throat.

Stuffing often contains **onions and garlic** both these ingredients contain the toxic ingredient thiosulphate. This can cause haemolytic anaemia, where the pet's red blood cells burst while circulating in its body.

Avoid giving your pet any fat trimmings too, as this can **cause pancreatitis**. '**Pigs in blankets**' (sausages wrapped in bacon) are usually a favourite at any festive mealtime but the high levels of salt can cause a dog to drink too much water, which can develop into a life-threatening condition called bloat.

Nasty nibbles

Entertaining guests over the Easter weekend typically brings with it platefuls of nibbles such as nuts, raisins and grapes. However, **Macadamia nuts, walnuts** along with most varieties of nuts contain high amounts of phosphorus which can lead to bladder stones. And, as little as six nuts are enough to cause some dogs to develop muscular tremors and paralysis in their legs. **Raisins and grapes** are toxic and in large quantities have proven fatal.

Certain fruits like **clementines contain pips** and the kernels of **plums, peaches and apricots** are easily dropped onto the floor, but these contain a type of cyanide compound that can poison a dog if it eats enough, resulting in dilated pupils, breathing difficulties, hyperventilation and shock.

Ghastly gifts

Pets, especially dogs, are particularly curious of mystery packages especially Easter Egg shaped boxes! So, make sure you keep any edible treats stored safely away. If you're decorating your house for Easter with fluffy chicks or bows, make sure you keep these out of reach from your pet.

Terrible tipples

Most of us enjoy a tippie during the Easter Bank Holiday, but remember that alcohol should be strictly kept in the hands of humans and away from furry paws! Dogs are much more susceptible to the poisonous effects of alcohol and ingestion can lead to laboured breathing, behavioural changes, hypothermia, seizures and cardiac arrest.



Edible Easter bunny

All is not lost as there are pet friendly Easter treats available:



Edible Easter egg



-Ends-

Hanne Grice is available for interviews on request

For more information please contact Jo Pinate 07956348931/ press.wtd@gmail.com or Hanne Grice 07976743031 or 01442 878628/info@walk-the-dog.net

Notes:

- Symptoms include
 - laboured breathing, liver damage, vomiting, diarrhoea, and discoloured urine. Mushrooms should also be avoided as certain types can be fatal.
- Hanne Grice is founder of Walk the Dog™, an award winning pet care and behaviour company in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire that offers a range of services from canine behavioural advice and training to dog walking. Visit www.walk-the-dog.net
- Walk the Dog™ new book by Hanne Grice - "Playing With Your Dog" is available from <http://www.walk-the-dog.net/petproducts.html> or <http://www.doglistener.tv/index.php/playing-with-your-dog/> plus Tesco, Waterstones, WHSmith's, Borders, Amazon online.
- Walk the Dog™- winners of the Special Merit Award 2007, 2008, 2009 from NARP and the Dacorum Business Award 'Most Promising Business' 2009.