



## Valentine's Day Promotional Ideas

Valentine's Day is a great time to share the love with your clients. Here are some great ideas to help drive traffic to your website, Facebook page and your clinic and a great opportunity to educate your clients.

- Hold a contest on Facebook asking clients to post their favorite "love story"
  - "What I love about my pet"
  - "What I love about my vet"
  - "What I love about my human" (submitted by pets)
- Offer photos in your lobby: Join in to have your photo taken with your favorite pet. (post on Facebook)
- Offer a "chocolate special" for any animal that is the color of chocolate
- If you have a street sign that you can change: Post something clever.
- Send emails to your clients and ask them to "love you" by 'liking you on Facebook.



- Use this time to educate your clients. Here is some great information to share with your clients.\*

### Chocolate is deadly to dogs



Chocolate ingestion is one of the most common reasons for a trip to the veterinarian. The problem with chocolate is that dogs will actually crave it once they have had a taste, and this can lead to serious problems. Although the reaction to chocolate may vary from dog to dog, chocolate is poisonous for dogs and may lead to death if enough is consumed.

Chocolate, as well as foods containing chocolate should be kept away from dogs at all times. Symptoms may not appear for a few hours, and may be confused for another illness. The most important thing to look for when dealing with chocolate toxicity is hyperactivity. Some dog owners have even described their dog's chocolate poisoning as a person being drunk. However, this is no laughing matter.

The longer chocolate stays in your dog's system without treatment, the more damage it will do. Chocolate poisoning may eventually lead to cardiac arrest. Always consult your veterinarian as soon as you suspect your dog has eaten chocolate.

### Why is Chocolate Bad for Dogs?

Chocolate contains an ingredient called theobromine. Theobromine is found in the cocoa bean and causes increased urination and affects the nervous system and heart. It is a chemical stimulant that belongs in the same category as caffeine and theophylline.

Most chocolates vary with the amount of theobromine it contains but even in small doses it can create a large problem for dogs and make them very ill. There is no known antidote to cure a dog with chocolate poisoning, so it is very important that chocolate be kept away from dogs.

Theobromine is also found in tea, Cola and certain types of berries.

### What Does Chocolate Do to Dogs?



A dog's body cannot handle chocolate because theobromine metabolizes much more slowly than in a human's body. Chocolate can stay in your dog's system for up to 20 hours. During this time, it may interfere with your dog's nervous system, heart muscles as well as the kidneys.

How chocolate will affect your dog depends on his size, reaction to theobromine and caffeine and his overall health. A dog with a weaker immune system or one that is prone to illness may show signs of ailment quicker than a healthy dog who consumes chocolate. The amount and type of chocolate will also depend on how ill he may become.

Symptoms will start to show within 12 hours of ingestion. Some symptoms include restlessness and diarrhea. To Learn more, visit our page on dog chocolate poisoning symptoms.

### **Types of Chocolate Dogs May Eat**

The amount of theobromine varies between different types of chocolate. Certain types of chocolate may not pose a serious risk for your dog, but may just give him a bout of diarrhea and vomiting. However, some types of chocolate, such as baker's chocolate or unsweetened chocolate may cause serious damage and lead to death if not treated right away.

The following shows the types of chocolate from least harmful to most dangerous:

- White chocolate
- Milk chocolate
- Semi-sweet chocolate
- Baker's chocolate

Below is a rough estimate of a toxic dosage amount for dogs:

- 1 ounce per 1 pound of body weight for milk chocolate
- 1 ounce per 3 pounds of body weight for semi-sweet chocolate
- 1 ounce per 6 pounds of body weight for sweet cocoa
- 1 ounce per 9 pounds of body weight for baker's chocolate.

As an example, 2 ounces of baker's chocolate is very dangerous for a 10-15 pound dog. However, 2 ounces of milk chocolate may only cause digestive problems.

As for white chocolate, this is the least dangerous to your dog. It contains the least amount of theobromine, roughly 1mg per ounce of chocolate. However, baker's chocolate contains around 465mg of theobromine per ounce. This is a big difference for the life of your dog.

### **What To Do**

It is surprising how many dog owners do not know that chocolate is toxic to dogs. Chocolate ingestion can be very common around the holidays as well as in homes that have children. Children have a tendency to want to share treats with their pets, and while they think they are being generous, they could make your dog very sick. If you came to this site thinking "my dog ate chocolate, what do I do now", please continue reading.

There are a few different steps to treatment to help treat your dog's chocolate poisoning. Some may be minor treatments, depending on the type of chocolate eaten and how much was consumed. You should always contact a veterinarian or animal poison control and follow proper procedures. However, there are some steps to take to ensure your dog rids the chocolate from his system.

### **What To Do if Your Dog Eats Chocolate: 1st Step**

The first step to treating chocolate poisoning is to collect some information before calling your veterinarian. Some things to note are:

- What kind of chocolate did your dog consume? Candy bar? Baking chocolate? White chocolate?
- What breed is your dog?
- How much does your dog weigh?



- Is there evidence around? This is helpful for chocolate bars. They usually show serving sizes in ounce on the packaging.
- Has your dog vomiting or had a bout of diarrhea?
- Roughly how long has it been since he consumed the chocolate?
- What kind of symptoms is your dog portraying?

### Induce Vomiting

The next step is to induce vomiting. This is recommended for the first few hours that your dog consumed chocolate. If it has been longer than 12 hours, you should not induce vomiting because it can cause damage to your dog's esophagus.

The first way to induce vomiting in your dog is by using hydrogen peroxide. The dosage should be 1 teaspoon per 10 pounds. Hydrogen peroxide should take between 10-15 minutes to induce vomit. If your dog goes not vomit during this time, wait at least an hour before trying again.

You may also be able to use regular table salt for inducing vomiting. Try using 1-2 tablespoons per 10 pounds.

You should never induce vomiting if your dog is unconscious, has a slow heart rate, his stomach looks bloated or he is having seizures.

### Activated Charcoal

Activated is a black, tasteless, odorless powder that is non-toxic for your dog. It is called "activated" because the particles expand in your dog's stomach, which makes the absorption capacity excellent for soaking up toxic substances. In this case, it will absorb the toxin known as theobromine from your dog's system. Once your dog has been given activated charcoal, it stays in your dog's stomach and binds to the toxin until it has all been absorbed. It is eliminated through your dog's feces.

Activated charcoal should be given after your dog's stomach has been emptied. Activated charcoal will help to soak up any residual poison in your dog's stomach and help to prevent it from reaching the bloodstream. Activated charcoal is known to absorb around 60% of poisonous substances.

Activated charcoal is NOT the same as regular charcoal. You can find it at your local health food stores. It comes in tablet, kits, liquid form as well as powder form.

### At The Veterinarian

There is no antidote to chocolate poisoning in dogs. If your dog is taken to the veterinarian, they may give your dog a few different types of treatments. Some things your veterinarian may do during treatment include:

- **IV fluids.** These will help prevent your dog from becoming dehydrated because of diarrhea and vomiting. The fluids may also help to flush theobromine out of your dog's system as well.
- **Activated charcoal.** This helps to soak any excess poisons in the stomach.
- **Vomit-inducing medications.** If you didn't do this at home, your veterinarian will give your dog medical treatments to help induce vomiting before beginning treatment with charcoal and secondary medications as well.
- In more serious cases, your veterinarian may have to give your dog anti-seizure medications, as well as cardiac medications. These help to reduce the chances of seizures and regulate the heart rate from theobromine and caffeine.

\*Courtesy of: doghelpnetwork.com

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