



The Big Football Game is Sunday, and it is a great excuse to get together with friends and family and pig out while watching football. Unfortunately, many of those same party foods can be dangerous for your pet. Here are five things you should keep far, far away from your cat or dog on Sunday.

### **1. Alcohol**

Having a frosty one with your friends is quite alright (if you're of legal drinking age, that is). Allowing your pet to partake of the beer is quite another. Consumption of as little as a few ounces of beer or other alcoholic beverages can result in ethanol poisoning in dogs and cats. Signs of poisoning include involuntary urinating, hypothermia, slowed breathing, and even heart attacks.

### **2. Chicken Wings**

Despite being an enshrined staple of football parties, chicken wings may prove problematic if your pet should stealthily grab one (or two!). In fact, the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) recently warned pet owners not to feed their pets chicken wings due to the risk of intestinal obstruction - or worse. Another often overlooked risk of chicken wings is salt. "One buffalo wing has almost 160 to 200 mg of sodium," said Dr. Ernie Ward, founder and president of APOP. "That's about the amount of sodium recommended for a 20-pound dog in a day. Feeding a dog too much salt can cause high blood pressure and can contribute to kidney and heart disease."

### **3. Chocolate**

Though it comes in many shapes and sizes, one thing rings true for all forms of chocolate - it can be poisonous to your dog or cat. The compound in chocolate that is of major concern is theobromine, which is most concentrated in dark chocolate and unsweetened baking chocolate - the kind of chocolates found in brownies and chocolate chip cookies, in other words. Chocolate poisoning can cause heart arrhythmias, muscle tremors, and seizures.

### **4. Soda**

Americans will spend over \$2 million on sodas and other soft drinks this weekend, according to Shape.com. That is a lot of soda and a lot of caffeine, which isn't so great if your furry friend should get to any of it. Caffeinated drinks (and foods) can cause your dog or cat to suffer from restlessness, breathing issues, heart palpitations, and muscle tremors.

### **5. Guacamole**

Your tortilla chips just wouldn't be the same without some guacamole piled atop them. Sadly, this creamy dip's recipe calls for three ingredients that are dangerous to dogs and cats: avocado, garlic, and onion. When consumed in sufficient quantity, onions and garlic can cause gastrointestinal issues, elevated heart rate, and red blood cell damage. Avocado toxicity, meanwhile, can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and lack of stool production.

