

Miller, Melinda W

# The dangers of Xylitol and dogs

by Michael Carleton

Everybody knows that chocolate should be kept out of reach of your pets, but there is a new threat to be concerned about when it comes to sweets today. The new types of artificial sweeteners they contain are even more dangerous than chocolate. The main culprit here is the artificial sweetener Xylitol, found in newer gums like Orbit and Zapp.

The danger of these new sweeteners is that, although the human body can metabolize these complex molecules, the canine body is unable to do so. Also, it seems that once they contact Xylitol in particular, it tastes so sweet that they find it literally irresistible. This complex unmetabolizable molecule, is actually a sugar alcohol, and not a true sugar. Due to it's inability to be broken down like normal sugars by the liver and pancreas in the canine body, therefore falls to the kidneys to filter it out like other unprocessable substances. However, the action of the kidneys is not enough to prevent the level of Xylitol in the blood from reaching a critical level, and the animal will experience overdose, even from as little as a single piece of gum. The net effect of all this leads to a Grand Mals type seizure within 24 hours of ingestion of the compound. The animal may experience as many as 3 or more seizures within 24 hours after ingestion of Xylitol. These symptoms are caused by an apparent acute onset of hypoglycemia, which causes lack of coordination, collapsing and seizures

Due to it's unique property of being sweeter to the tongue than sugar, Xylitol tends to have a near addictive response in dogs who have been exposed to it. This leads to a dangerously high chance of toxic exposure occurring in dogs that have already been exposed to it, whenever they are in it's presence.

Like special precautions that must be taken with certain chemicals or compounds and children, special care should be taken in attempting to prevent exposure of our beloved pets to this chemical. Although it is safe and palatable for human consumption, like many other chemicals and compounds, it can be extremely dangerous to our canine friends.

Learn more about this author, Michael Carleton.

Looking for a car that's sporty, fun and fits in your budget? [Read reviews on AOL Autos](#).