



PRESS RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kathy Finnie, Executive Director
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
802-878-6888
Kathy@vtvets.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

By M. Kathleen Shaw, DVM
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association

Dog Toxicant Xylitol Appearing in Peanut Butters

Every dog owner knows the challenge of medicating a dog with pills that taste bad. Most people hide the pill in cheese, deli meat, or peanut butter. What you need to know is that many peanut butter manufacturers have started using xylitol to sweeten their product. Xylitol is toxic to dogs.

Xylitol is a sweetener that until now has been used primarily in sugar free gums and candies, baked goods, desserts, toothpaste, and other oral care products in the United States. It is increasingly found in some over the counter items that are prescribed by veterinarians including certain antihistamines, fish oil, melatonin, and Vitamin B12. Beyond its use as a sweetener, xylitol also can be used to preserve moisture and is used in non-food products such as shampoos and lotions. Humans can consume xylitol with no problem but because of differences in metabolism, it can be toxic to dogs. (Xylitol is toxic to cats too; we just don't see as many toxicities because cats tend to be choosier about what they eat.)

The number of xylitol poisonings in dogs is on the rise. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control center reports that since they started tracking calls in 2007, the number of cases has more than doubled to over 3,727. The actual number is likely much higher since some veterinarians have treated enough cases that they no longer need to call the center for guidance. When dogs ingest xylitol, it causes a rapid increase in insulin which can cause a serious drop in blood sugar. This can lead to vomiting, weakness, staggering, and seizures within 30-60 minutes of consuming even small quantities of xylitol. It can also lead to liver failure.

If you suspect your pet has ingested a xylitol containing product, call your veterinarian immediately. Do not attempt to remedy the situation at home. Prevention includes keeping pets away from xylitol containing products. Known companies that add xylitol to peanut butters include Go Nuts, Hank's Protein Plus Peanut Butter, Krusch Nutrition, Nuts 'n More, and P28. Because xylitol can appear in other products and under other names, be on the lookout for any ingredient that includes the letters "xyl" and keep those products away from your pets.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 340 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.