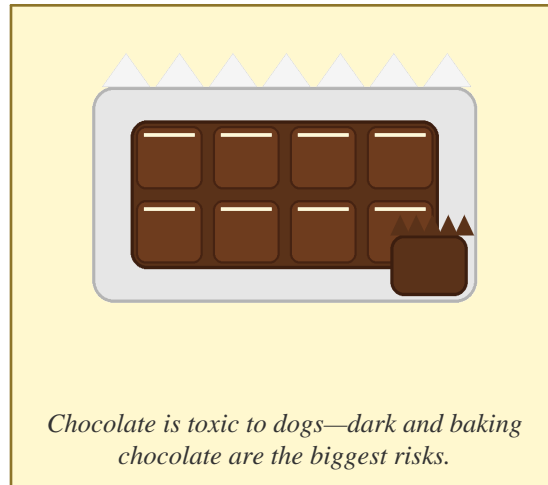
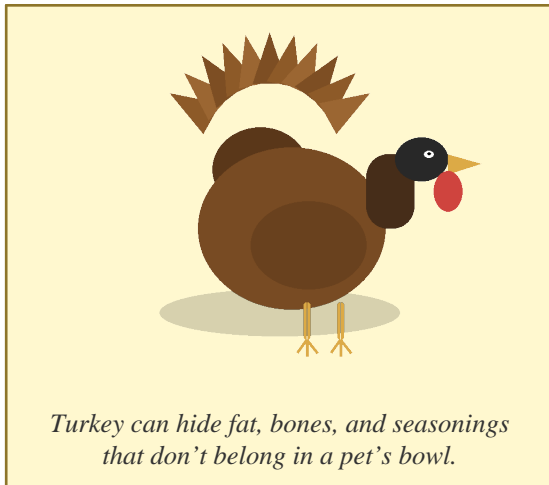


Holiday Pet Safety: Turkey & Chocolate

What looks like a harmless treat to us can cause real problems for dogs and cats. Here's what to watch for during the holiday season.



Why turkey can be risky for pets

Plain, fully cooked turkey breast (no skin, no bones, no seasoning) may be tolerated in tiny amounts. The risk comes from the “holiday extras” that often ride along with turkey.

- **Cooked bones splinter.** They can crack teeth, get stuck, or cause intestinal blockages.
- **Fatty skin and drippings are a pancreatitis trap.** Rich, greasy foods can trigger painful inflammation of the pancreas.
- **Seasonings and stuffing ingredients can be harmful.** Onion/garlic/chives and salty stuffing are common problems.
- **Gravy and salty foods add extra strain.** High salt is risky, especially for pets with kidney, heart, or blood pressure issues.
- **Raw turkey is not a safe treat.** Raw poultry can carry bacteria that can make pets and people sick.

If you want to share turkey at all:

- ✓ Use a pea-sized to thumbnail-sized piece (depending on your dog's size).
- ✓ Only plain, fully cooked white meat: no skin, no bones, no gravy, no stuffing.
- ✓ If your pet has had pancreatitis, digestive disease, or food allergies—skip it and ask your vet what's safest.

Chocolate is toxic to dogs (and risky for cats too)

Chocolate contains methylxanthines (mainly theobromine and caffeine). Dogs metabolize these more slowly than people, so even small amounts can be a problem—especially for small dogs.

Why chocolate is a holiday hazard

- **It's everywhere.** Advent calendars, gift boxes, baking supplies, and desserts are often within reach.
- **Some types are concentrated.** Dark and baking chocolate contain much more theobromine than milk chocolate.
- **Packaging is its own danger.** Wrappers, foil, and sticks can cause choking or a blockage.

Chocolate risk guide (general)

Type	Typical Risk
Baking / cocoa powder	Highest risk (very concentrated)
Dark chocolate	High risk
Milk chocolate	Moderate risk (still can be serious)
White chocolate	Low theobromine, but still fatty/sugary (stomach upset, pancreatitis risk)

If your dog ate chocolate

- Don't wait for symptoms. Call your veterinarian (or an after-hours clinic) right away.
- Have the chocolate type, amount, and your pet's weight ready. Keep the wrapper/label if you can.
- Do not give home remedies or try to induce vomiting unless a veterinary professional tells you to.

Prevention that actually works

- Store chocolate and baking supplies in closed cupboards (not on counters).
- Keep plates and gift bags out of reach during gatherings.
- Use a lidded garbage can—many dogs go straight for wrappers and leftovers.

Bottom line: Skip the “holiday bites.” If you want to treat your pet, choose a pet-safe option and keep rich human foods and chocolate locked away.

This article is general education and doesn't replace veterinary advice. If your pet has eaten chocolate, bones, fatty foods, or anything you're unsure about, contact a veterinarian promptly.