

Can dogs eat chewing gum?

From the sweeties.net wiki

No. Do not give chewing gum to a dog, and if your dog has eaten some, call a vet straight away.

Why gum is so dangerous for dogs

The problem is not the gum itself but a sweetener found in many sugar free gums: xylitol. Xylitol is safe for people and is widely used in sugar free gum because it is good for teeth. But it is poisonous to dogs.

In a dog, xylitol causes the pancreas to release a large amount of insulin. Insulin lowers blood sugar, and the result is a sudden, dangerous fall in blood sugar, called hypoglycaemia. Depending on how much was eaten, it can be life threatening. The US Food and Drug Administration says effects can appear within 10 to 60 minutes of eating xylitol, although some serious problems can take 12 to 24 hours to show.

How much is too much?

Not much. As little as about 100 mg of xylitol for every kilogram of a dog's body weight can trigger the dangerous insulin release. Gums vary a lot in how much xylitol they contain, and small dogs are at greater risk, so depending on the gum and the dog, a single piece may be enough to do harm. Because you cannot easily tell how much xylitol was in what your dog ate, it is safest to treat any sugar free gum as an emergency.

Signs to watch for

The FDA lists vomiting, followed by signs of low blood sugar such as:

- being quiet and less active than usual
- weakness
- staggering or poor coordination
- collapse
- seizures

Do not wait for these signs before calling a vet. By the time they appear, your dog may already be seriously ill.

What to do

1. Call your vet, or an emergency vet if it is out of hours, straight away.
2. Tell them what your dog ate and roughly how much, and when.

3. Keep the packet: the ingredients list tells the vet whether xylitol is in it.

Where else xylitol hides

It is not just gum. The FDA lists sugar free sweets, breath mints, sugar free ice cream and baked goods, toothpaste, mouthwash, cough syrup, chewable vitamins, some over the counter medicines and even some peanut butters. Check labels on anything described as sugar free or low sugar, and keep it out of reach.

Other sweets and dogs

Chocolate is dangerous for dogs too, for a different reason. We look at sweets and pets more widely in [can dogs eat sweets?](#).

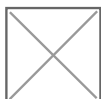
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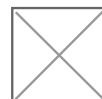
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