

Xylitol Toxicity in Dogs

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Toxin
Xylitol

Source

Artificial sweetener in gums, breath mints, candy, and other human food sources.

General Information

Many dogs like sweet foods, and can be attracted to human foods containing xylitol. Xylitol is toxic in several ways in dogs. It can cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and it can be very toxic to the liver of dogs, causing acute liver failure. The liver failure can in turn cause bleeding episodes.

Toxic Dose

One or two pieces of xylitol-sweetened gum could cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in a 20 lb. dog. As little as 5 pieces of gum could cause acute liver failure in a 10 lb dog.

Signs

Signs of hypoglycemia may include weakness, lack of energy, incoordination, and sometimes seizures. The hypoglycemia may not occur until 12-18 hours after ingestion. Signs of liver failure from xylitol toxicity may include vomiting, depression, weakness, lack of appetite, jaundice (yellowing of the gums and inner eyelids), blood in the feces, and other bleeding.

Immediate Action

Induce vomiting and seek veterinary attention.

Veterinary Care

General treatment: The induction of vomiting may be continued, and gastric lavage is performed. [Activated charcoal](#) is not effective for xylitol toxicity.

Supportive treatment: Intravenous fluids will be started and blood glucose levels will be monitored for several days and tests for liver disease will be performed. In cases of vomiting, medications to control the vomiting may be given. In liver failure, antibiotics and medications to support the liver may also be given.

Specific treatment: Unavailable.

Prognosis

Recovery from hypoglycemia is likely if treated. The prognosis for dogs with liver failure is guarded.