

Hidden Danger of Onions



Onions are a favorite food through the summer, and onion products (onion salt, minced onion) are found in many of the foods we eat. For this reason it's important to know that onions can be a danger to your cat or dog. Many of us have heard about chocolate being poisonous for dogs, and poinsettias a problem for cats, but onions?

Onions contain chemicals that are toxic to both cats and dogs. All types of onions are dangerous, including cooked, raw, dried, minced and even onion powder. When pets ingest onions, they cause damage to their red blood cells, resulting in "Hemolytic Anemia". In actuality, the onion toxin causes red blood cells to burst, leading to lethargy, diarrhea and vomiting. Since the reaction occurs in the bloodstream, it can take two to four days for the symptoms to appear. Obviously this makes it much trickier to diagnose.

If you think your pet has ingested an onion product, and they show any of these signs, it's important that you contact your veterinarian as soon as possible. For this, and other reasons, it's a great idea to have easy access to your veterinarian's phone number, but to also keep the address and phone number of an emergency veterinary center handy.

The easiest way to avoid this issue altogether is to resist the temptation to feed your cat or dog table scraps. Minced onion and onion powder are ingredients in a wide variety of foods, some of which you may find surprising. There are many reasons veterinarians discourage pets from eating "people food", so consider "hidden onions" to be just one more reason. Your pet will thank you with a long and happy life!



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