

# Choc Tox in Dogs Cheat Sheet

*Rule of Thumb: the darker & more bitter the chocolate, the more toxic it may be!*

## Toxic Compounds

Theobromine + Caffeine = **Methylxanthines**

## Quick Toxic Dose Intervals for Methylxanthine

~20 mg/kg PO 

~40 mg/kg PO 

~60 mg/kg PO 

> 40 to 45 mg/kg PO considered life-threatening

## Clinical Signs

(onset ~1 to 4 hr, up to ~24 hr)

Vomiting, diarrhea, polyuria, polydipsia, hyperactivity, cardiotoxicity, tremors, seizures, etc.



See the *Vetpocket app* for our amazing Chocolate Toxicity, Fluid Therapy, and Blood Gas Calculators + Reference Material!



## Treatment Guidelines

### TREAT LIFE-THREATENING CLINICAL SIGNS FIRST

#### Decontamination:

- If early enough, up to ~8 hours following ingestion, if asymptomatic, and if not contraindicated: apomorphine 0.01 to 0.04 mg/kg IV, SC, IM, or 0.25 mg/kg PO, or 6.25 mg tablet subconjunctivally followed by sterile saline ocular lavage post emesis.
- If not contraindicated: activated charcoal 1 to 3 g/kg PO ONCE WITH SORBITOL, can repeat WITHOUT SORBITOL at ½ of the 1st dose q ~8 hr for 24 to 48 hr (enterohepatic recirculation). MONITOR FOR HYPERNATREMIA, BENEFIT MUST OUTWEIGH RISK.
- Rarely indicated: gastric lavage.

#### Supportive Care Considerations:

- IV fluid therapy (balanced electrolyte crystalloid) to help maintain perfusion, hydration, correct electrolyte disturbances, and for diuresis. MONITOR FOR FLUID OVERLOAD.
- Frequent walks (q ~4 hr) or urinary catheter placement to help eliminate urine (methylxanthine reabsorbs through the urinary bladder wall).

#### Symptomatic Care Considerations:

- Monitor and treat: vomiting, hyperactivity, cardiac arrhythmias, tremors, seizures, hyperthermia, etc. *See the Vetpocket app for treatment guidelines.*
- Potential complications: aspiration pneumonia, pancreatitis, hyperglycemia, electrolyte disturbances, acid-base disturbances, etc. Particular caution with diabetes mellitus. Methylxanthines are excreted in milk and cross placenta.

#### Hospitalization Time:

- ~12 to 24 hr, up to ~72 hr with severe cases.