



# Ashland Animal Hospital

## Progressive Compassionate Pet Care

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### Xylitol Toxicity in Dogs

Xylitol is a sugar alcohol used in candy and chewing gum. It is also found in some pharmaceuticals and oral health products such as chewable vitamins and throat lozenges. While Xylitol is safe for humans, it can be harmful to dogs.

The compound doesn't affect glucose levels in people, but when ingested by dogs it can cause a dangerous drop in blood sugar levels, (hypoglycemia can occur in as little as 15 - 30 minutes). At higher doses, Xylitol is believed toxic to the canine liver.

Because the amount of sweetener used in sugar-free chewing gums varies by manufacturer and product, the number of sticks of gum that would prove toxic to a individual dog can't be stated with precision. As a general rule of thumb, as few as 4 pieces can cause hypoglycemia in a 50 lb dog, and between 20 and 30 pieces can cause liver toxicity.

If you think your dog has consumed sugarless gum or any other product containing Xylitol, call your veterinarian immediately. Most likely you will be instructed to bring your pet in to have vomiting induced and IV fluids started, but if you live more than an hour away from a vet, you may have to induce vomiting at home.

Veterinary treatment generally involves 24-hour hospitalization and infusion with intravenous fluids containing glucose. Your dog's blood sugar will be monitored every few hours and the dose of glucose being fed to him by IV adjusted as needed. If liver values are normal after 24 hours, your dog will be sent home.

To how to prevent such poisonings, recognize that dogs are long on sweet tooth and short on judgment and act accordingly. Do not leave tasty items lying around. Put sugar-free gums and candies where dogs can't get at them. Keep chewable vitamins out of the way too.

If you bake with Xylitol, store the resultant goodies well out of your pets' reach and do not hand-feed them bits of Xylitol-laced muffin as a treat no matter how much they beg. Never rely on the presumption that what is safe for a human to ingest is equally safe for your pets.