

BowWOW!

Facts, observations and musings about Our Best Friends

“Bone” appetit!

Trick-or-Treat is just around the corner and with it comes a dog's deluxe temptation of great smelling, forbidden human food conveniently packaged in crinkly bite-sized portions. While most of us cannot resist giving our canine friends a little snack now and then, Halloween is not the time to succumb to your dog's baleful stares that he-hasn't-had-anything-to-eat-in-a-week.

We all know chocolate is bad for dogs. Theobromine, a component of chocolate, is the toxic culprit that causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea as the first signs of overload. If Fillmore, a 44 pound brown dog, happens to eat that half-pound bar of baking chocolate, he could experience cardiac arrhythmias, epileptic seizures, internal bleeding ...or worse. Unsweetened chocolate contains 8-10 times the amount of theobromine as milk chocolate.

Chances are that the artificial processed chocolate used in commercial Halloween treats contains very little real chocolate but sneaking Fillmore a fun-size candy bar for every three you eat just to assuage your guilt is still not a good idea. Years ago when my lab, Tucker, was a teenager and experimenting with counter cruising, he gobbled down two pounds of foil-wrapped chocolate Christmas candy my father had sent for the holidays. Knowing that my father could never pass up a bargain and that the chocolates were mostly brown wax from a third world country, I was not so much concerned about toxicity as I was the fact that Tucker did not stop to unwrap the candies before he ate them. He felt a bit puny for a day and poo'd sparkle foil for another three but otherwise came out unscathed. I was lucky. Certainly, if you're going to display your Halloween treats, be sure to place them far out of Fillmore's reach.

Treats for your dog, however, are fine; after all, we snack between meals, too. It's worth the joyous little doggie dance your pet will do when he knows you have something special for him in your hand. But treats should contribute to your dog's overall wellness and compliment his already good diet. Be wary of packaged treats masquerading as human foods that are sold in grocery stores. Read labels. Most of these products claiming to be bacon-y good are merely extrusions of complex chemical goo made palatable with salt and artificial garlic powder or chemical “smoke” additives.

Good treats need to be low in fat, good tasting and nutritious-high in vitamins and minerals. Vegetables are great treats to offer your dog. Sweet tiny raw carrots, sweet red peppers, pieces of banana, apples or pears are big canine faves. Tucker's favorite real food treat was fresh pineapple. Though, to be honest, the

only human food he ever turned down was a chunk of Jerusalem artichoke but then, I can't really blame him.

If you're in a baking mood you can simply dehydrate slices of sweet potato or beef liver in a slow oven till crisp. One of my clients reports that when she bakes a batch of liver treats, Miss R parks next to the oven door for the duration. There are also oodles of recipes for homemade dog cookies on the internet if you want to really indulge your pet.

And finally with treats, remember to subtract the volume of snack food your dog receives each day from the volume of his regular meals. A dog will pork up just as easily as we will when snacking is out of control.

BowWOW! Is a production of Tracie Korol and **wholeDog**.
Want more information? Have a question? Send a note to Tracie at letstalk@wholedog.biz or visit www.wholedog.biz.