

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DOG OWNERS

The Dog-Safe Kitchen Guide

Everyday foods, hidden hazards, smarter portions, and a clear plan for the moments that matter.



EVERYDAY FOOD SAFETY, MADE SIMPLE

Know before you share.

Use this guide to make thoughtful decisions before sharing food, spot the ingredients that change the answer, and know when to call for help.

SHARE

Simple foods that may fit

CHECK

Portions and details that matter

ACT

Hazards and emergency steps

Five questions before you share a bite

A food is not automatically safe because it is fresh, natural, or familiar. The ingredient, preparation, portion, and your dog's health all shape the answer.

1

What exactly is it?

Name the food and every ingredient. Sauces, seasonings, sweeteners, coatings, and fillings count.

2

How was it prepared?

Plain and fully cooked is usually easier to assess than raw, fried, smoked, heavily salted, or seasoned food.

3

How much?

A lick, a training-size bite, and a full serving are different exposures. Smaller is safer when trying an appropriate food.

4

Is this dog a good candidate?

Age, size, allergies, pancreatitis, diabetes, kidney disease, medications, and prior reactions can change the answer.

5

What happens next?

Watch for vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, tremors, trouble breathing, collapse, or unusual behavior. Call promptly if concerned.

Stop and call if you notice

DIGESTIVE

Repeated vomiting, severe diarrhea, retching, or a swollen and painful abdomen

NEUROLOGIC

Weakness, wobbling, tremors, seizures, unusual agitation, or sudden collapse

BREATHING

Pale or blue gums, labored breathing, choking, or difficulty staying awake

THE SAFEST DEFAULT

When a food is appropriate, offer it plain, in a very small amount, and separately from other new foods. That makes both prevention and observation easier.

Fresh does not always mean safe

Produce can add variety and useful nutrients, but seeds, pits, peels, preparation, and portion size matter. Wash produce and serve it plain.

+ SHARE

- Apple flesh, with core and seeds removed
- Banana
- Blueberries and strawberries
- Carrots and cucumber
- Plain green beans
- 100% plain pumpkin
- Seedless watermelon
- Cooked sweet potato

First taste: one or two small pieces.

? CHECK

- Broccoli and cabbage: small portions
- Citrus flesh: may upset the stomach
- Peaches and plums: remove pits
- Tomato: ripe flesh only
- Spinach: ask your vet for dogs with kidney concerns
- Avocado flesh: high fat; pit is a choking hazard

Preparation and health history can change the answer.

! KEEP AWAY

- Grapes and raisins
- Onion, garlic, chives, and leeks
- Wild mushrooms
- Rhubarb leaves
- Fruit pits and large seeds
- Moldy or fermented produce
- Macadamia nuts
- Anything sweetened with xylitol

Possible exposure? Call before symptoms appear.

THE PRODUCE PREP CHECK

1 Wash

Rinse fresh produce and remove damaged areas.

2 Remove

Discard pits, cores, hard seeds, stems, and rinds.

3 Simplify

Serve plain, without butter, sugar, salt, or seasoning.

4 Downsize

Cut into pieces appropriate for your dog's size.

Plain preparation changes the picture

The same food can move from reasonable to risky when it is fried, fatty, raw, heavily seasoned, served with bones, or combined with unsafe ingredients.

Protein: keep it lean and fully cooked

- Plain cooked chicken, turkey, lean beef, or pork can be offered in small portions.
- Plain cooked salmon or tuna may be an occasional bite. Remove bones and skip oil, brine, and seasoning.
- Fully cooked egg is a simple option for many healthy dogs.
- Avoid cooked bones, raw yeast dough, heavily fatty scraps, and food seasoned with onion or garlic.

Grains: think plain and modest

- Plain cooked rice, oats, pasta, and quinoa may be appropriate for many dogs.
- Choose unseasoned foods without butter, rich sauces, raisins, chocolate, or artificial sweeteners.
- Bread is not nutritionally necessary. A small plain bite is different from raw dough.
- Check mixes, bars, cereals, and baked goods for xylitol, macadamias, raisins, and chocolate.

THREE EASY UPGRADES

Remove

bones, pits, skewers, strings, wrappers, and corn cobs

Simplify

skip sauces, glazes, spice blends, and rich toppings

Downsize

make the first taste smaller than you think it needs to be

What does plain really mean?

No coating

Skip breading, batter, glaze, gravy, and creamy sauce.

No seasoning

Avoid onion, garlic, spice blends, excess salt, and sweeteners.

No risky extras

Remove bones, skewers, wrappers, strings, cobs, pits, and shells.

The details can change the answer

Some foods are not inherently toxic but can still create problems because of fat, sodium, lactose, choking risk, preparation, or a dog's medical history.

Dairy

Many adult dogs digest lactose poorly. Choose plain, lower-fat options and start with a tiny amount. Skip flavored products and anything containing xylitol.

Peanut butter

Use only a product confirmed xylitol-free. Choose unsalted and offer a thin smear, not a spoonful. Nut butters are calorie dense.

Fatty foods

Bacon, sausage, skin, drippings, fried foods, and rich table scraps can trigger digestive distress and may contribute to pancreatitis.

Salty foods

Chips, cured meats, broths, and seasoning blends may contain excessive sodium. Salt dough and homemade ornaments are especially dangerous.

Individual tolerance

Every dog is different. Introduce one food at a time and watch digestion, skin, energy, and behavior before making it a regular part of the routine.

Changing needs

Age, activity, current health, medications, and past reactions can change which foods and portions support your dog best.

CHECK IN WITH YOUR VETERINARY TEAM IF YOUR DOG HAS

pancreatitis, diabetes, kidney or urinary disease, food allergies, a history of digestive upset, unexplained weight change, or a medication that may interact with food.

A short list worth memorizing

Risk depends on the substance, amount, timing, and dog. If exposure may have occurred, do not wait for symptoms before calling your veterinarian or animal poison control.

HAZARD	WHY IT MATTERS	POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS
Xylitol	Can cause rapid, dangerous low blood sugar and liver injury.	Vomiting, weakness, collapse, tremors, seizures
Grapes and raisins	Can cause acute kidney injury. A reliable safe dose is not known.	Vomiting, lethargy, appetite loss, increased or reduced urination
Chocolate and cocoa	Methylxanthines affect the heart and nervous system. Darker products are more concentrated.	Restlessness, vomiting, rapid heart rate, tremors, seizures
Onion and garlic family	Can damage red blood cells. Powders and concentrated forms count.	Weakness, pale gums, rapid breathing, dark urine
Alcohol and raw yeast dough	Alcohol depresses the nervous system; rising dough can expand and produce alcohol.	Bloating, vomiting, poor coordination, weakness, collapse
Macadamia nuts	Can cause a distinctive syndrome in dogs even when other nuts do not.	Weakness, vomiting, tremors, fever
Caffeine	Coffee, tea, energy products, pills, and grounds can overstimulate the heart and nervous system.	Agitation, rapid heart rate, tremors, seizures
Cooked bones and corn cobs	May splinter, obstruct, or injure the digestive tract.	Gagging, abdominal pain, repeated vomiting, straining

Symptoms may be delayed

A dog can appear normal early in an exposure. A reassuring first hour does not rule out kidney, liver, blood-cell, or digestive injury.

There is no reliable home test

Smell, taste, body size, and online dose calculators cannot replace case-specific guidance from a veterinary professional.

IF AN EXPOSURE MAY HAVE OCCURRED

Call your veterinarian or animal poison control promptly. Do not induce vomiting or give a home remedy unless a veterinary professional instructs you to do so.

Read the package, not just the front

Brand names and recipes change. Check the ingredient list every time, especially for sugar-free products, baked goods, supplements, drink mixes, and flavored foods.

SCAN FOR THESE WORDS

- xylitol, birch sugar, or wood sugar
- raisins, currants, grape juice concentrate
- cocoa, cacao, chocolate, coffee, caffeine
- onion powder, garlic powder, chives, leeks
- macadamia nuts, alcohol, hops, raw yeast dough

THE PACKAGE CHECK

1. Read every ingredient.
2. Confirm preparation and serving size.
3. Check the calorie load.
4. Look for warnings and storage directions.
5. Recheck after a label redesign or reformulation.

Four common kitchen mix-ups

PLAIN YOGURT

MAY BE REASONABLE

Flavored yogurt may add sugar, fat, chocolate, fruit preparations, or xylitol.

COOKED CHICKEN

MAY BE REASONABLE

Rotisserie chicken often adds salt, fat, onion, garlic, and skin.

PEANUT BUTTER

MAY BE REASONABLE

Sugar-free or specialty nut butter may contain xylitol or other added ingredients.

COOKED OATS

MAY BE REASONABLE

Granola can contain raisins, chocolate, macadamias, sweeteners, and excess fat.

KEEP THE PACKAGE

If something goes wrong, the exact ingredient list, product size, lot information, and estimated amount eaten can save valuable time. Take a photo before throwing anything away.

THE RECHECK RULE

Packaging, formulas, and serving directions change. A food you checked last month still deserves a fresh label read today.

The 10% treat rule

Treats and shared foods should usually provide no more than 10% of daily calories. The remaining 90% should come from a complete and balanced diet suited to your dog.

10%

TREATS AND EXTRAS

Think in dog-sized portions

For many dogs, a treat-sized taste is a few pea-sized or thumbnail-sized pieces, not a bowlful. Calories add up quickly in cheese, nut butter, meat scraps, baked goods, and oils.

Use part of the daily meal for training when practical, and reduce extras if body weight begins to creep up.

Natural and whole-food approaches

Whole foods can support an integrative approach to care when they are chosen intentionally and fit the individual dog. Natural does not mean risk-free, and more variety is not always better. The goal is to support the whole dog while protecting nutritional balance, digestion, body condition, and quality of life.

Start one at a time

A single new food makes it easier to identify what caused a reaction.

Keep a simple log

Record the food, amount, time, and any digestive, skin, energy, or behavior changes.

Build a complete plan

Long-term home-prepared or heavily customized diets should be formulated with qualified veterinary nutrition guidance.

RAW AND HOME-PREPARED DIETS

Raw and home-prepared diets can support a natural approach when ingredients, hygiene, sourcing, and nutritional balance are handled thoughtfully. An integrative veterinarian or qualified veterinary nutrition professional can help you create a complete plan that fits your individual dog.

Stay calm, move quickly, bring details

Fast, accurate information helps the veterinary team assess risk. Keep this page where everyone in the household can find it.

1

Remove access

Secure the food, package, medication, plant, trash, or spilled product so no more can be eaten.

2

Collect the facts

Note the product name, ingredients, estimated amount, time of exposure, dog's weight, symptoms, and health conditions.

3

Call for guidance

Contact your veterinarian, an emergency clinic, or animal poison control. Do not wait for symptoms when a known toxin may be involved.

4

Do not improvise

Do not induce vomiting or give milk, oil, salt, charcoal, or another home remedy unless a veterinary professional directs you.

5

Follow through

Bring the packaging or a clear photo. Follow monitoring and treatment instructions exactly, even if your dog currently appears normal.

HAVE THIS READY

product and ingredients | estimated amount | time eaten | dog's weight | symptoms | medical history and medications

ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL**(888) 426-4435****PET POISON HELPLINE****(855) 764-7661**

Both services operate 24/7. Consultation fees may apply.

GO DIRECTLY TO EMERGENCY CARE

for choking, trouble breathing, blue or pale gums, repeated seizures, collapse, loss of consciousness, or severe abdominal swelling. Call ahead while someone else drives when possible.

Pause before you share

Use this last page as the quick reminder. For the full context, return to the earlier sections or search the Can My Dog Eat That Food Guide.

SHARE PLAIN

- Apple flesh
- Banana
- Berries
- Carrots
- Green beans
- Pumpkin
- Cooked lean meat
- Fully cooked egg
- Plain rice or oats

Try one new food at a time.

CHECK FIRST

- Dairy
- Peanut butter
- Broccoli
- Citrus
- Tomato
- Fatty foods
- Salty foods
- New foods
- Any mixed dish

Read every ingredient before sharing.

KEEP AWAY

- Grapes and raisins
- Onion and garlic
- Xylitol
- Chocolate and cocoa
- Alcohol
- Raw yeast dough
- Macadamia nuts
- Caffeine
- Cooked bones

Call promptly after a possible exposure.

USE THE FULL GUIDE WHEN

the food is mixed or seasoned, your dog has a medical condition, the amount is uncertain, symptoms are present, or the ingredient is not listed on this page.

A quick list cannot tell the whole story.

Search the complete Food Guide for ingredients, preparation details, portions, and practical next steps.

canmydogeatthat.com/food-database/

Educational information only. This guide does not replace veterinary advice.

SEARCH THE GUIDE

With guidance from Dr. Candy Akers, DVM