

## Household Hazards

There are quite a few everyday things in the house that can be dangerous to beagles. Some are dangerous due to beagle greed and some due to toxicity. It is worth investing in child locks for cupboards and fridges for those beagles which are determined.

Food hazards include chocolate-did you know what the better quality the chocolate the more likely it is to be toxic? This is because of a substance called Theobromine which dogs cannot detoxify in their body. Theobromine levels are higher the higher the cocoa solid levels. Humans can deal with this substance OK but dogs should be taken to the vet if they get into boxes of chocolate or bars. Usually your vet will try and make a dog sick but if it is too late then give activated charcoal to try and absorb some of the residue in the gut. The same substance is present in cocoa mulch commonly found at garden centres. It is unwise to use this on your garden if you own beagles. The beagles find chewing it irresistible and can end up seriously ill-there are reports of fatalities as well.

Grapes, raisins and currants can lead to kidney failures if consumed in quantities. Next time you bake don't leave packets near the edge as they are a draw to that beagle nose. The cause is not known but is thought to be related to the moulds which can be found on grape skins. Another toxic every day vegetable is onions. They cause the red blood cells in dogs to burst and cause acute anaemia. Barbeques can be irresistible to dogs so be careful next time there are kebabs around as beagles may like to join you in the feast.

Another less well known hazard is Anti-freeze. This is very sweet and every year both dogs and cats die from its effects. Treatment needs to be within 2 hours of consumption to be successful and consists of infusions of alcohol intravenously. One of the main problems with this is leaking car radiators. Dogs may lick up the pools created and only small quantities are needed to cause kidney shutdown. In cats it is thought one mouthful is fatal in some cases.

I am often asked about feeding bones. Cooked bones are a risk as they splinter and if one has a beagle who has stolen a chicken carcass high fibre as soon as possible such as brown bread is a good way to help coat and protect the bones inside. Most lumps of bone will dissolve if they reach the stomach due to stomach acid but splinters may puncture the gut wall. Raw bones are often fed as part of the BARF diet. This only uses raw bones and specific ones. If anyone wants to use this there are good books and web sites about how to do it safely.

Most house plants are labelled well these days but always check before bringing a new one in. Some can be very toxic and look very pretty. Beagles enjoy changing the shape of leaves and fraying plants so keep them out of reach if in doubt. Likewise be careful about berries in the autumn in the garden. Pods such as Laburnum are also very poisonous and some bulbs such as daffodils should be buried deep.

The moral of the piece is being Beagle Aware! My own house may not be any good for a Country magazine feature but there are not many things that beagles can eat-I think.....

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