

Sierra Animal Wellness Center

Specializing in Holistic, Integrative Veterinary
Medicine



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Summer Fruits and Your Four-legged Friends

One of the great joys of summer is the bounty of delicious fruit and that bounty is already showing up in many produce sections. Like us, many of our four-legged friends enjoy a refreshing piece of fruit on a warm day.

Keep in mind that while fruit can be part of a healthy diet it does not provide the protein your dog or cat needs to thrive. It should be offered only in moderation and it is important to keep in mind that not all fruits are safe for our animal companions. Dogs are more likely to enjoy fruit than cats, as cats' taste buds don't have sweet receptors.

Before offering any fruit to your dog or cat, be sure to wash it thoroughly and remove any leaves, stems, rinds, inedible skins, and seeds. These are generally toxic to our dogs and cats. Also, exercise common sense and never let your dog or cat eat a whole pitted fruit. Pits contain cyanide and in addition to being poisonous, can cause choking or a blockage or obstruction in the animal's stomach or intestinal tract.

So, do you know which fruits you can safely share? And just as importantly, which ones to avoid? Here's a quick rundown and while no means exhaustive it does include a number of common favorites.

All the following fruits are safe for your dog or cat to eat:

Apples have amazing antioxidant benefits and are high in pectin, a type of soluble fiber that can soothe irritated intestines. Remove any leaves, stems and seeds.

Bananas, high in fiber, vitamins and minerals, are also high in carotenoids, polyphenol compounds shown to protect against chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and types of cancers. Do not feed the skin. Save it for your compost pile.



Berries (blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, raspberries) come packed with powerful antioxidant, anti-cancer, and anti-inflammatory benefits. Dr. Jean Dodds, D.V.M., one of the top animal health researchers and founder of NutriScan, a saliva-based food intolerance test for dogs, **recommends avoiding strawberries** due to the potential for dogs to exhibit allergic reactions similar to those seen in humans.

Cantaloupe, besides tasting great are also rich in antioxidants and B vitamins, vitamin K, potassium, and magnesium. Cantaloupe also contains lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoids shown to benefit eye health. Remove the rind before feeding.



Pears with skin are one of the highest-fiber fruits and being low in acid they are a great choice for pups with sensitive stomachs. They also have a good amount of vitamins C and K, and minerals, and also contain phytonutrients, including beta-carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin. Do remove any seeds, stems or leaves.

Watermelon, besides being juicy and sweet, is packed with phytochemicals and provides powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. Due to its high water content, watermelon is low in calories and high in refreshment - the perfect summertime thirst quencher to cool off your canine.

Generally safe but use caution:

Pineapple has powerful antioxidant properties from high levels of vitamin C, plus serious anti-inflammatory effects from bromelain, but use caution and only give small portions, as too much vitamin C and bromelain may lead to severe digestive upset, including diarrhea and vomiting. We would not recommend pineapple for dogs with sensitive tummies.

Pitted fruits: Apricot, cherry, mango, peach and plum are full of potassium and beta carotene and the fleshy fruit can make a good treat. But avoid the skin and always remove the leaves, stems and pits as they contain cyanide that could result in poisoning. In addition to being poisonous, seeds and pits are also a choking hazard or may lodge in

the stomach or intestines. Always remove all pits or seeds prior to letting your dog indulge in fruit.

Avocados contain a substance called Persin and while often listed as "poisonous", those of you whose canine and feline companions enjoy the occasional avocado indulgence can breathe a sigh of relief. Persin does not adversely affect dogs or cats. The primary danger of avocados to dogs and cats concerns eating the stem, skin or swallowing the large pit. Never feed your pet a whole fruit.

Warning: *If your household includes birds, rodents, rabbits, horses and/or ruminants (e.g. cattle, sheep, goats) Persin is highly toxic to these species and no part of the avocado should ever be fed to them.*

Oranges - Cats may not be interested in eating oranges, but dogs have been known to enjoy this sweet treat. The nutrients and Vitamin C can help their immune system and flush toxins out of the body. However, the seeds, peel, leaves, or stem of the orange contain oils that are poisonous, so make sure you only feed the fleshy part of the fruit.

Citrus fruits like lemons, limes, and grapefruit as well as persimmons, while not considered poisonous, can cause an upset stomach. But the oils in the skin and the seeds can be dangerous so never feed them. Chances are your dog or cat won't appreciate the sour taste of these fruits.

Poisonous, never offer to your pets:

Grapes and raisins can cause acute (sudden) and irreversible kidney failure in cats and dogs. It is unknown what the toxic agent is in these fruits. However, clinical signs can occur within 24 hours of eating and include vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy (tiredness). If your dog or cat eats these, immediately contact the clinic, emergency veterinarian, or the **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435** for life-saving advice.

More questions on safe treats? Give us a call at the clinic at (530) 346-6611.

Until next time, be well.

- Dr. Peggy

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Clinic Hours

Monday, Thursday and Friday
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