

Table scraps for pets? Please don't.

Table scraps and human food aren't complete and balanced nutrition for pets. At best, they can make a pet obese. At worst, they can be toxic.

You may think that giving your favorite cat or dog table scraps is a bonding experience or an expression of love. But feeding table scraps and some human food can cause problems for your pet: obesity, inflammation of the pancreas and gastrointestinal upset, and they can even be toxic. It can also lead to picky eating and begging.

Obesity

Studies have found that canine obesity is linked to the number of meals and snacks fed, the feeding of table scraps and the dog's presence when owners prepare or eat their own meals. And in 2018, an estimated 60% of cats and 56% of dogs in the United States were overweight or obese. This is a problem that sometimes starts with, "I'll just give him something special

on a holiday." Also, nutrients in typical table scraps don't meet your dog's need for complete and balanced nutrition.

Toxic food

Here are a few foods that can be toxic for pets to eat.

- > **Grapes and raisins** can lessen a dog's appetite as well as cause lethargy, gastrointestinal upset, dehydration and kidney failure.
- > **Milk-based products**, like ice cream, can lead to gastrointestinal tract issues, vomiting, diarrhea and allergic reactions.
- > Certain seasonings, like **onions, garlic and chives**, can irritate a pet's gastrointestinal tract and lead to anemia, asthma attacks and liver

damage. Severe poisoning can be fatal.

- > **Sweets and sugar substitutes** are a no-no, with major culprits that include chocolate and the sugar substitute xylitol (both toxic to dogs).

Our recommendation? No table scraps.

Table scraps aren't a substitute or a healthy addition to a complete and balanced dog food. If you love to feed table scraps or human food to your pet, but you're concerned some of it might be unhealthy, be sure to talk to your veterinarian. And dive into all the other ways you can enjoy your pet's company: playing, going for walks or just spending some quality time and petting.

