

**ACCES for Pet Health**

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**Paintballs, Playdough and Macadamia Nuts**

**By Dr. Patrick Miles**

Ingestion of potential toxins is a common reason for dogs to present for an emergency examination. Many people recognize potential toxins readily such as Tylenol, rat baits, ibuprofen, chocolate, etc. Other potential hazards are not as obvious or common. Paintballs, home-made play dough, and macadamia nuts would not usually come to mind as concerning if ingested by a dog.



Homemade Play Dough is very appealing to dogs.

Paintball and home-made play dough ingestion can result in an elevation of the sodium concentration in the blood. Paintballs often contain substances that when ingested pull water into the intestinal tract causing dehydration and a rise in the blood sodium level. Home-made play dough has a large amount of sodium (table salt). A very high blood sodium level can lead to increased thirst, vomiting, depression, ataxia (wobbliness), tremors and even seizures. Rapid changes in the sodium concentration in the blood and brain can be quite serious and life threatening. Treatment is aimed at decontamination and administration of fluids to help reduce the sodium concentrations.

Macadamia nut ingestion is also uncommon and calls usually occur because the owners are concerned about the chocolate ingestion usually associated with the nuts. Symptoms can be mixed and associated with chocolate toxicity. Vomiting, hyper excitability, tremors, elevated heart rates can be seen from chocolate ingestion. Macadamia nuts can cause profound hind leg weakness mimicking paralysis. The mechanism is unknown. Ingestion usually causes no blood work abnormalities. Treatment is aimed at decontamination and supportive measures such as fluids and observation. Hind limb weakness usually resolves within 12-24 hours and no long term effects have been reported. Dogs are fairly indiscriminant in what they will eat. It is always recommended if your dog eats something that you are unaware if it is toxic or not to contact your veterinarian or animal poison control.



Macadamia Nuts

Posted by [Christina Ryan](#) at September 15, 2010 12:00 a.m.

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