**Ask Dr. OES**

**Introducing a New Column from the Health and Research Committee (HRC)**

Each issue of the OET will have this new Question and Answer section.

Anything you ever wanted to know about the health of your Old English Sheepdog will be answered here by knowledgeable individuals providing current and accurate information.

Questions can be emailed to **oeshealth@gmail.com**.

Your questions will be published anonymously. Ask anything; the HRC will answer!

**Dear Dr. OES,**

**My dog sleeps a lot during the winter months.**

**Do you think he’s dreaming of which Old English Sheepdog will be picked to pull Santa’s sleigh?**

**Hopefully waiting for CHRISTMAS!**

Dear Hopeful,

Weight pull requires a well-conditioned dog. Wake that dog up and take him for a walk, if you really want to get him ready in time for pulling Santa’s sleigh!

Dr. OES

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**Dear Dr. OES,**

**The holiday season means that there are so many generous people to beg for yummy treats!**

**![C:\Users\SJenkins\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\02ZU204L\sick[1].jpg]()Any suggestions on what I should do to calm my upset stomach?**

**Flatulent Fido**

Dear Flatulent,

When your company sneaks you too many tasty treats and you have the usual complications (vomiting or diarrhea), one of the best things you can do is take a rest from food to allow your system to reset. A complete fast of 24 hours without food or water (or only limited amounts of water) can stop the imbalance and avoid the much-dreaded trip to the vet’s office.

If you are vomiting, food and water should be withheld. If the vomiting continues and you vomit more than 3-4 times in an hour or more than 9 times in the course of an evening, you may need to be taken to the vet’s office or emergency clinic. Unfortunately, at this point, injectable medications are needed to stop the vomiting.

Of course, if at any time you appear to be in trouble, such as retching without anything coming up, your sides appear distended, or you are having difficulty standing, a trip to the emergency clinic is necessary.

Dr. OES

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**Dear Dr. OES,**

**I just stole the turkey with all the fixins and a big bowl of rising bread dough! Hee hee!**

**It was delicious, but now I am feeling rather stuffed. What is the best course of action?**

**Bloated in Berkley**

Oh Bloated!

You might have just ruined Christmas for you and your family. The cooked turkey bones splinter very easily and so vomiting should not be induced.

In addition, bread dough will continue to ferment in the stomach, resulting in excessive carbon dioxide formation which will cause bloat. The longer it stays in the stomach, the greater the chance that fermentation products such as alcohol and other byproducts will be absorbed, which can lead to toxic blood alcohol levels quickly. **This is a very serious problem! Immediate veterinary care is needed!** Gas X (Simethicone) can be used to help break down gas in the stomach and to help alleviate stomach distention while you are traveling to the emergency clinic.

Dr. OES

**Dangerous Christmas Plants for Dogs**

* **Poinsettia:** When people think of toxic Christmas plants, the most common one they mention is poinsettia. Although the sap from the leaves can be irritating to the mouth and can cause vomiting if ingested, it would take a large quantity to be deadly. Caution, especially with puppies, should still be taken because seizures, coma, and even death have occurred.
* **Mistletoe and Holly:** These plants, including the berries, are more dangerous than poinsettias. If ingested, these plants and berries cause vomiting and diarrhea, excessive drooling, and abdominal pain. In addition to severe gastrointestinal upset, breathing problems and a sudden drop in blood pressure can occur. Even the dried berries are toxic.
* **Daffodils:** The leaves, flowers, and the bulbs are toxic to dogs and can cause gastrointestinal problems.
* **Amaryllis:** If any part of the plants is ingested, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive salivation, lethargy, and tremors can occur. The bulb is thought to be particularly dangerous.
* **Yews and Evergreens:** Often used as wreaths and table decorations and especially popular with florists, these plants are extremely toxic and life-threatening if any part of the plant is ingested. Symptoms include drooling, vomiting, change in heart rate and respiration, dilated pupils, tremors, seizures, coma, and death.
* **Christmas Tree:** Although it is not considered toxic, the sap from the needles can be irritating to the mouth. Also, if the needles are eaten, GI problems including obstruction and perforation could occur.

**Dangerous Christmas Foods for Dogs**

* **Chocolate:** The chemical theobromine in chocolate is toxic to dogs. The darker and more expensive the chocolate, the more theobromine it has and thus, the more toxic it is. Baker’s Chocolate is particularly dangerous to dogs.
* **Grapes, Raisins, and Currants:** Dried forms of these fruits are more toxic. In addition to GI issues (vomiting and diarrhea), kidney failure can occur.
* **Black Walnuts and Macadamia Nuts:** Ingestion of these nuts can cause the dog to appear weak in their hind limbs, sleepy, wobbly, and stiff when walking. Vomiting, tremors, and fever may also occur.
* **Blue Cheese:** Dogs are sensitive to the fungus used to produce these cheeses, including Roquefort. In extreme cases the dog may develop muscle tremors and seizures, lasting for up to 2 days.
* **Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, chives:** These plants contain a substance that can damage red blood cells and cause life-threatening anemia. Signs may not be present until a few days after ingestion. They include vomiting, diarrhea, sleepiness, weakness, rapid breathing, and no appetite.
* **Xylitol:** This sugar alcohol is used as an artificial sweetener in many sugar-free gums and candies as well as in some mouthwashes, toothpastes, and even peanut butter! In dogs, it is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream and causes a rapid release of insulin producing a blood sugar drop which can result in life-threatening hypoglycemia within an hour. Seizures, coma, and liver failure can occur. **Immediate and aggressive veterinary treatment is necessary.**

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ASPCA has a list of poisons on their website: **https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control**,

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 and they have a 24-hour, 365-day hotline **1-888-426-4435** (with a $65 fee).

 **Keep an eye on your dogs (and cats) over the Christmas Holidays.**

**BE SAFE, NOT SORRY!**

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**A List of Safe and Unsafe Human Food for Dogs**

**SAFE**

**Apples**

**Bananas**

**Blueberries**

**Broccoli**

**Cantaloupe**

**Carrots**

**Chicken and Turkey**

**Eggs**

**Fish**

**Green Beans**

**Honey**

**Kiwi**

**Mango**

**Oatmeal**

**Peanut Butter (smooth, without xylitol)**

**Potatoes (cooked, skinless)**

**Pumpkin**

**Sweet Potato**

**Rice (brown)**

**Yogurt**

**UNSAFE**

**Alcohol**

**Avocado**

**Chocolate (especially Baker’s Chocolate)**

**Coffee**

**Fat trimmings from meat**

**Garlic**

**Grapes**

**Gum**

**Macadamia nuts**

**Onions**

**Pits and seeds from fruit**

**Potato skins and raw potatoes**

**Raisins**

**Rhubarb**

**Salty food (in large amounts)**

**Tea**

**Walnuts**

**Xylitol (artificial sweetener)**

**Yeast and uncooked doughs**