



Contact: Nicole Martin
Marketing Manager, AVECCC
nicole.martin@azervets.com
480-497-0222

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AVECCC Warns About Dangers on Valentine's Day *Flowers, Chocolate and Xylitol Pose Risks to Pets*

Gilbert, AZ: Arizona Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Center (AVECCC) wants pet owners to be aware of the dangers surrounding Valentine's Day. While most people know that chocolate is toxic to pets, there are other potential dangers that are common to the holiday.

Flowers, chocolate, and Xylitol are all pose serious risks for injury and poisoning. Certain flowers and plants can have dangerous effects. Tiger Lilies, for example, can cause acute kidney failure in cats. Other Valentine's Day dangers include candles, which can be knocked over and cause burns or fire, and gift/food wrappings, which, if ingested, can cause intestinal blockage.

Dr. Mason Saari, Associate Veterinarian at AVECC, also warns about a common sugar substitute found in many sugar-free products, "Xylitol can be found in sugar-free products such as gum, mints, candies, baking products, toothpaste, and even certain brands of peanut butter," Dr. Saari said, "When ingested, xylitol causes a massive release in insulin in pets that is not seen in humans. This can cause a rapid drop in blood sugar, which can lead to weakness, lethargy, seizures, and, if left untreated, even death. Xylitol can also have a delayed effect of liver failure up to 3-5 days after ingestion."

Poisoning symptoms can vary, depending on the substance, however some of the symptoms pet owners should watch for include, but are not limited to, restlessness, agitation, irregular heart rate, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, loss of appetite, and lethargy.

"We know pet owners have the best intentions, but mistakes happen," said Dr. Brandi Mattison, AVECCC Medical Director. "Sometimes it just comes down to a lack of awareness. Understanding the dangers of certain foods and substances can go a long way in preventing potentially dangerous situations. Should a pet ingest or come into contact with something toxic, knowing what symptoms to look for can save a pet's life."

If your pet ingests any amount of chocolate, xylitol, or comes into contact with other poisons or toxins you should seek immediate veterinary advice. If your pet exhibits any of the symptoms of poisoning above, bring your pet to AVECCC or the closest veterinary emergency care clinic immediately.

ABOUT AVECCC

Arizona Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Center (AVECCC) is located in Gilbert, Arizona and provides 24/7 emergency and critical care services to companion animals. AVECCC employs more than 100 professional, experienced staff members that have specialized training and certification in emergency and critical care services. The critical care center also has the distinct advantage of being the only emergency practice with four board-certified emergency and critical care specialists and a residency program in the Phoenix metro area. Their team is committed to providing the best training and education programs to both its resident veterinarians and those within the local veterinary community. AVECCC is proud to announce a new West Valley location which will be open Spring 2020. For more information about AVECCC, please visit www.azervets.com.

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