

Toby and Xylitol

Toby came to visit us because he was a no no bad dog. He decided that he needed fresh breath and proceeded to eat a brand new 100 count bottle of IceBreakers Arctic Grape sugar free gum. When the owner came home they noticed that Toby vomited up approximately 40 pieces of gum along with his breakfast. They brought him in to the clinic right away. When he got to the clinic we induced vomiting and retrieved another 40 pieces of gum. Unfortunately, that meant about 20 pieces of gum already worked its way passed out of the stomach into the intestines.

Why is sugar free gum so bad? we eat it all the time! That is a great question and the answer is simple. Xylitol in dogs is absorbed rapidly in the bloodstream, which causes a very strong release of insulin from the pancreas and cause low blood sugar or hypoglycemia. It can happen very quickly within 10-60 minutes. Hypoglycemia if left untreated can be life threatening and cause seizures. This is not the only problem there is with xylitol ingestion however. If large amounts are ingested it can cause liver failure. There are a lot of brands of food, especially gum, that contain xylitol. Pets in general really like the taste of it because it is sweet and normally has other flavors added. This naturally occurring sweetener is extremely toxic and should be treated immediately if you suspect that your pet has ingested it. Xylitol popularity has grown over the years due to its dental advantages and it is very low on the glycemic index, so it is a great substitute for sugar. For treatment of xylitol ingestion it is induction of vomiting if within the right time frame to remove any undigested portions of the substance. Also, IV fluids with dextrose added to flush and replenish the glucose. Blood work needs to be done especially to monitor glucose and the liver values. The liver can be treated with a liver supplement like Hepato or Denamarin.

So back to Toby. After the induction of vomiting a blood test was performed just to see how his values were. Come to find out his glucose was very low and his liver values have spiked. This has only been approximately two hours since ingestion of the gum. An IV catheter was placed and a mixture of fluids and dextrose was administered

in order to stabilize Toby. He spent a couple of hours on IV fluids here in the hospital then he was transferred to Veterinary Specialty Center for continued care and monitoring. The poor pup had to spend three days in the hospital on constant fluids, monitoring and blood work rechecks.

As of today we are happy to report that Toby has made a full recovery and is happy and healthy at home with his family. His liver values are just about back to normal with a little help from the liver supplement Hepato. We all would hope that Toby has learned his lesson, but let's just face it gum is just too tasty to resist.