

1. Prep for Glow Stick Ingestion

The APCC gets lots of panicked calls around Halloween from people whose pets have ingested the liquid in glow sticks. Typically, a mild and self-limiting taste reaction will be seen. If you have an owner that reports a pet has had multiple taste reactions, try this trick: Take the pet into a dark place (like a closet or a windowless bathroom) and see if they glow (especially around their mouth or neck). You will want to wipe off any spots that glow with a damp cloth to prevent the pet from licking the substance and having another reaction.

2. Ditto for Chocolate Ingestion

Make sure you have your chocolate wheel handy for all of those chocolate calls so that you can make a quick assessment of how large the risk is for the pet. (VIN has a great calculator for in-depth calculations as well.) And be sure to bone up ahead of time on your chocolate toxicity smarts!

3. Ask the Right Questions

Many times, obtaining a good history will be the most important thing you can do. Always make sure that you get as much information as possible. For example, if dealing with chocolate ingestion find out all the details: Was it filled? Is any sugar-free? Is there a percentage of cocoa listed on the package? How many ounces or pieces are missing?

4. Watch for Emesis

Timely emesis is often key to preventing significant signs in asymptomatic pets with chocolate toxicosis. Dogs will often vomit a large percentage of the chocolate ingested, and you may avoid seeing significant signs in pets who have ingested mild to moderate doses of chocolate.

5. Test Sedatives in Advance

Some pets may need a sedative to cope with all the monsters coming to their doors. Make sure your clients know they should ask for instructions well in advance, and it is always a good idea to do a trial run before the big night to see how a pet will react to a sedative. Don't wait until Halloween night to test a new medication!