

Sugar Substitute (Xylitol) and Dogs. What You Probably Don't Know!

Many pet owners are aware that the sugar substitute Xylitol, found in many sugar free chewing gums (and candy), is toxic to dogs. However few pet owners would think to look for Xylitol listed as an ingredient in a pet oral health product; especially one that claims to be developed by "Veterinary Dental Specialists" .

As ridiculous as it might be, the pet oral health product C.E.T. AquaDent lists as the third ingredient Xylitol; well known to be toxic to pets. AquaDent is sold by many pet retail outlets including 1800PetMeds. com. The 1800PetMeds website states "C.E.T. AquaDent is a drinking water

additive formulated by veterinary dental specialists to help freshen your pet's breath and maintain oral hygiene in conjunction with regular home dental care for your pet." The ingredients in AquaDent are listed as follows:

- Purified water
- Glycerine
- Xylitol
- Polysorbate 20
- Potassium sorbate
- Emulgase (enzyme)
- Zinc gluconate, Sodium benzoate
- FD&C Blue No. 1
- FD&C Yellow No. 5
- Chlorhexidine gluconate.

According to Dr. Eric Dunayer, veterinarian and toxicologist for the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, there appears to be a strong link between xylitol ingestions and the development of liver failure in dogs. It was previously thought that only large amounts of xylitol could result in problems for dogs, however recently even small amounts of xylitol can result in severe illness in dogs (and believed to effect cats and other animals as well).

Snopes.com states that just three grams of Xylitol can kill a 65 pound dog. "Because the amount of sweetener used in sugar free chewing gums varies by manufacturer and product, the number of sticks of gum that would prove fatal to a pooch of that size can't be stated with precision. As a general rule of thumb, between eight and ten pieces of gum might be deadly to a 65 pound canine, but a smaller dog could easily die after ingesting far less (perhaps as few as two sticks of gum)."

The 1800PetMeds website provides the following warning regarding AquaDent Pet Oral Health Product: "Prepare fresh C.E.T. AquaDent solution every day and discard any treated water not consumed within 24 hours." The website provides no warning of Xylitol toxicity to animals.

To make matters a bit worse, not only does this pet oral health product contain the known dangerous ingredient Xylitol, it also contains dyes linked to cancer and numerous other health risks.

C.E.T. AquaDent is made by Virbac Animal Health (www.virbacvet.com). Virbac Animal Health produces a long line of pet health products; from antibiotics to heartworm preventatives (Iverhart) to pet vitamins (Pet Tabs). Virbac Animal Health was on the FDA warning letter list (December 10, 2008) for violations of current Good Manufacturing Practice regulations; "the documented violations cause drug products manufactured at your facility to be adulterated."

Virbac Animal Health's Heartworm Preventative, Iverhart Plus, was recalled 2/11/2004. From the FDA website (<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/enforce/2004/ENF00834.html>) "The firm is recalling 4 lots of IVERHART Plus Flavored Chewables due to contamination of Minocycline, a FDA approved human drug which has not been approved in species other than humans." "VOLUME OF PRODUCT IN COMMERCE 1,179,840 tablets."

Why would a pet product, formulated by "veterinary dental specialists" , contain an ingredient that is known to be toxic to dogs? It's illogical and reckless. The moral of the story is this, read the ingredients of every single product provided to your pet. Just because a pet product is "formulated by veterinary specialists" doesn't mean its safe.