

FDA is Warning Pet Owners on the Dangers of Xylitol Ingestion in Dogs and Ferrets

February 18, 2011

The Food and Drug Administration is cautioning consumers about the risks associated with the accidental consumption of xylitol by dogs and ferrets. Xylitol is a sugar alcohol approved for use in many common products, including sugar-free baked goods, candy, oral hygiene products, and chewing gum.

Xylitol can be found in many over-the-counter drugs such as chewable vitamins and throat lozenges and sprays. It can also be purchased in bulk bags for use in home baking. These products are intended only for human use.

FDA is aware of complaints involving dogs that experienced illness associated with the accidental consumption of xylitol. Xylitol is safe for humans but it can be harmful to dogs and ferrets.

FDA is advising consumers to always read the label on products and to not presume that a product that is safe for humans is safe for your pet.

The FDA reports included clinical signs such as a sudden drop in blood sugar (hypoglycemia), seizures and liver failure. If you suspect your pet has ingested xylitol, some signs to look for are depression, loss of coordination and vomiting. The signs of illness may occur within minutes to days of ingesting xylitol. Owners should consult their veterinarian or pet poison control center immediately for advice if they know or suspect that their pet has ingested a human product containing xylitol.

Consumers who wish to report animal illness, please contact the FDA consumer complaint coordinator¹ in your state or use the Safety Reporting Portal².