



MONEY

Fido's sweet tooth makes for a scary Halloween vet bill

Kelli Grant
TODAY

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Today

Halloween can be an expensive holiday for pet owners—and we're not just talking about **the growing market for pet costumes**.

Veterinarian reports of chocolate toxicity spike 140 percent during the week of Halloween, according to insurer Petplan. The bills for Fido's chocolate sampling are getting pricier, too, with a typical cost of \$627. That's up nearly 20 percent from last year. In some cases, reports Petplan, claims have topped \$3,000.

"It's fairly normal for chocolate-related poisonings to increase this time of year," said Dr. Jules Benson, vice president of veterinary services for Petplan. "It's the accessibility."

Between the bowl of handouts for trick-or-treaters and kids' own collected stashes—both of which may be put in accessible spots—pets have more opportunities to gobble candy than they do at other times of the year.

Chocolate's danger depends on the weight of your dog and the type and quantity of chocolate they consume, said Dr. Daniel J. Fletcher, an emergency and critical care specialist at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. In a small dog, even one dark chocolate Hershey's Kiss might be enough to trigger a problem. (Chocolate is also toxic to cats, he said, but cases are rare. Cats tend to be pickier about what they eat.)

It's not always easy to spot the signs, with so much candy on hand and dogs' tendency to eat the evidence (i.e., the wrappers). To a pet owner, chocolate toxicity looks pretty similar to any trick-or-treater's sugar high—they'll be hyperactive, said Fletcher. Other symptoms include panting, pacing and dilated pupils.

The chemicals in chocolate can also trigger vomiting and diarrhea, as well as less-observable symptoms like high blood pressure and irregular heartbeat. "Those can be life-threatening," said Fletcher.

Chocolate isn't the only Halloween candy danger. Sugar-free candies and gum containing xylitol can result in seizures and liver failure, and raisins can lead to kidney failure. Even the candy wrappers themselves may obstruct the digestive tract if Fido didn't thoroughly chew his stolen treats. (When in doubt about whether or how much candy your pet has ingested, call your vet.)

If there's good news, it's that rising bills for chocolate toxicity treatments have largely stemmed from better quality care, further improving Fido's chances of surviving his encounter with the Halloween candy bowl, Benson said. There are more effective drugs to aid vomiting pets, and more sophisticated tests to help determine the best course of treatment.

But avoiding an expensive vet bill is not hard: Just keep treats in a secure container and out of reach of curious pets.

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MONEY

These are the best amusement parks in the US for families



Jordi Lippe-McGraw
TODAY

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School is out for many kids, and that means trying to come up with summer activities to keep them occupied. Thankfully, there are amusement parks. Not only are there plenty of things for kids explore, from roller coasters to fun houses, but adults can have a good time, too.

*Cedar Point*

Cedar Point in Ohio is known for its crazy water park.

Family Vacation Critic, a TripAdvisor site, tested out a number of amusement parks in the U.S. and just named their **top picks for 2017**.

“For those **traveling** with family members of various ages — including kids-at-heart — finding a park that caters to thrill-seekers and the younger set isn’t always so easy,” said Lissa Poirot, the site’s editor-in-chief said in a statement. “This list includes parks that successfully cater to both, and those that also have exciting new features for the 2017 season.”

For starters, the editors recommend Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio. The 364-acre property, located along Lake Erie, is one of the largest amusement parks in the world and features 75 rides and 17 coasters. That means there’s a ride to please children of any age, plus VIP cabanas, two family care centers, restaurants, shopping and live entertainment to appease mom and dad, too. Oh, and Cedar Point just

expanded its water park into a 38-acre secondary park.

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Incredibly, Cedar Point isn't the only Ohio park to make the list. Kings Island in Mason, Ohio, was also a top pick as it's known for having the world's longest wooden roller coaster, the Beast, measuring in at around 7,400 feet across 35 wooded acres. Though it still holds the title, a new wooden coaster joined the park this year and reaches speeds of 53 mph. And it's not just for the big kids; there are tons of rides with no minimum-height requirement for toddlers to experience.



Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri, has this crazy roller coaster.

And if you're looking for a theme park minus the famous mouse, then you should consider Hershey Park in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Inspired by the famous candy the city produces, the park boasts 13 roller coasters, a candy factory tour and more than two dozen kiddie rides. This year, the park opened three drop towers: Hershey's Tower, the tallest at 189 feet; Reese's Tower, at 131 feet; and Hershey's Kisses Tower standing at 80 feet tall. Bonus: There's no admission to the neighboring Chocolate World, where you get to take a ride through the chocolate-making process. Yum!



Candy and rides? Yes, please!

Check out the full list below.

1. Cedar Point - Sandusky, Ohio
2. Dollywood - Pigeon Forge, Tennessee
3. Silver Dollar City - Branson, Missouri
4. Hershey Park - Hershey, Pennsylvania
5. Universal's Islands of Adventure - Orlando, Florida
6. Universal Studios - Hollywood, California and Orlando, Florida
7. Kings Island - Mason, Ohio
8. Six Flags - nationwide



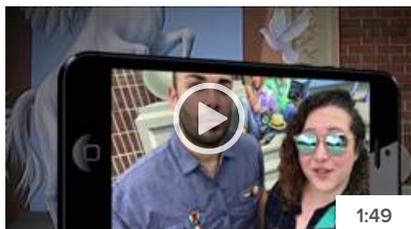
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Dollywood's 'Lightning Rod' Is World's Fastest Wooden Roller Coaster

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Remembering the Pulse Nightclub Shooting, One Year Later

1:49



Hobby Farming? It's On the Rise, Especially Among Retirees

1:49



A Look at One of Russia's Thousands of 'Ghost Villages'

2:22



Support Surges for Girl Disqualified From Tournament 'Like a Boy'

1:36

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