**Toxins to Avoid**

**Blue-green Algae (Cyanobacteria)**

 Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) is a microscopic bacteria found in lakes, streams, ponds and brackish water. It can produce toxins that affect people and animals who drink from the contaminated water.

 Blue-green algae colonize to form “blooms” that give the water a “pea soup” color. It also looks like blue or green paint on the surface of the water. Algal concentrations are most abundant during periods of hot weather in mid to late summer months and are most likely to be found in nutrient-rich water. While most

blue-green algae blooms do not produce toxins, it is not possible to determine the presence of toxins without testing. Thus, all blooms should be considered potentially toxic. Very small exposures, such a few mouthfuls of water, may result in fatal poisoning.

 Clinical signs of poisoning are dependent on the toxin involved, and can result in liver damage or failure. Signs include vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stool or black, tarry stool, weakness, pale mucous membranes, jaundice, seizures, disorientation, coma, and shock. Death generally follows within days as a result of liver failure. Aggressive, immediate treatment is necessary to help treat this quick-acting, potentially fatal poison.

 Unfortunately, there is no antidote for the toxins produced by blue-green algae. Immediate veterinary care is imperative. If you suspect your dog was exposed to

blue-green algae, contact your veterinarian immediately.

**Xylitol**

 Xylitol is a natural, sugar-free sweetener commonly found in many chewing gums, mints, foods (pudding and gelatin snacks, etc.), oral rinses, toothpastes, and OTC supplements (sugar-free multivitamins, fish oils, etc.). The Xylitol content of these products can vary widely depending on brand and flavor.

 In dogs, smaller ingestions can cause an acute, life-threatening low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) within 10-15 minutes. Larger ingestions can result in acute liver necrosis, liver failure and death.

 Signs of xylitol poisoning in dogs include weakness, lethargy, collapse, vomiting, tremors, seizures, jaundice, malaise, black-tarry stool, coma and death.

If you suspect your dog ingested xylitol, contact your veterinarian immediately for

life-saving treatment recommendations.

 Treatment includes monitoring of blood sugar and liver values, IV fluids with Dextrose and liver protective drugs as needed.