

**FDA**U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
U.S. Food and Drug Administration

FDA Facts: Jerky Pet Treats

FDA has been actively investigating consumer complaints about jerky pet treats causing illness in dogs and in some cats. As of Sept. 24, 2013, over 3,600 dogs and 10 cats have reportedly become ill from eating jerky pet treats.

The treats are sold as jerky tenders or strips and are made with chicken, duck, sweet potato, dried fruit, and in combinations of these ingredients.

Product samples have been tested for contaminants known to cause the symptoms and illnesses reported in pets including *Salmonella*, metals, pesticides, and antibiotics, and were screened for other chemicals and poisonous compounds. Nutritional composition analyses have been conducted including fatty acids, crude fiber, glycerol, protein, ash and moisture, and other excess nutrients. The purpose of nutritional composition testing is to verify the presence of ingredients listed on the label. To date, none of the tests have revealed the cause of the illnesses.

Treats Are a Treat

Pet treats are not a necessary part of a fully balanced diet, so eliminating them will not harm pets. All the nutrients your pet needs can be found in commercially produced pet food.

What to Look Out For

Watch your pet closely. Signs that may occur within hours to days of feeding the products are decreased appetite, decreased activity, vomiting, diarrhea (sometimes with blood or mucus), increased water consumption and/or increased urination. Severe cases are diagnosed with pancreatitis, gastrointestinal bleeding, and kidney failure or the resemblance of a rare kidney related illness called Fanconi syndrome. Although FDA has reports of more than 580 deaths, many pets have recovered.

Testing Samples

FDA is testing samples of jerky pet treats. FDA is working with the Veterinary Laboratory Investigation Response Network

(Vet-LIRN) to test samples of jerky pet treats. FDA laboratories and the other animal health diagnostic laboratories in the Vet-LIRN™ network obtain samples of treats directly from the source for testing. In some instances, after obtaining medical histories of pets that have been seen by a veterinarian, FDA may plan and organize testing of treats collected from consumers based on the case profiles. FDA recommends that pet owners whose pet becomes sick after eating jerky pet treats should hold on to any unused portion of the product in its original container for at least 60 days, in case FDA calls to request samples for testing. Owners should place the container inside a sealable plastic bag, if possible.

Contacts

You can help FDA's investigation by reporting your complaints through the Safety Reporting Portal (www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov) or your local FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinator (www.fda.gov/Safety/ReportaProblem/ConsumerComplaintCoordinators/default.htm).

You can also contact the pet food/treats company (see packaging for contact information) and alert them about your pet's illness.

If you require the use of a Relay Service, please call the Federal Relay Services toll-free from a TTY device (1-800-877-8339).

For More Information

FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine:
www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/default.htm

Report pet food complaints:
www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/ReportaProblem/ucm182403.htm

Questions & Answers about jerky treats:
www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/ProductSafetyInformation/ucm295445.htm

Created: October 2013