mystery science

Grades K-5
Mini-Lesson: “Why can't dogs eat chocolate?”

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

VIDEO 1

Hi. It's Jay. Do any of you like chocolate? I used to love chocolate as a kid, and I still love chocolate now. I've even visited places where they make it, like Mackinac Island, Michigan, Hershey, Pennsylvania, and San Francisco. There's just so much you can do with chocolate, like make candy bars and brownies and cookies with it, or put it on top of ice cream and frost cakes with it. Some people even make amazing art out of it, like this Eiffel Tower. It's made entirely of chocolate. Woah. Someone named Valentina is curious about chocolate. Let's give Valentina a call now.

[Video Call]

- Hi, Jake.
- Hi, Valentina.
- I have a question for you. Why can't dogs eat chocolates?
- Oh, that's a great question.

While there are a lot of human things that dogs can do, there are some human things that dogs probably shouldn't do, like drive a bus, fly an airplane, or teach a class. And they definitely shouldn't eat chocolate. It's just not good for them. But why is that? I mean, most humans can

eat chocolate without problems. Why can't dogs? Before I go on, I'm curious. Why do you think dogs shouldn't eat chocolate?

VIDEO 2

This is such an interesting question because every animal is different, and there are so many things animals can and can't eat. Like check out this koala. See how it's munching on those eucalyptus leaves? Koalas eat lots and lots of those leaves, and it's totally fine. But eucalyptus leaves are poisonous to other animals like deer and foxes. Oh, and check out this opossum. They can eat venomous rattlesnakes and pit vipers without getting hurt. Woah. And then there's humans. We eat lots of chocolate, but dogs can't. They shouldn't eat chocolate at all, not even a little. Poor dogs. You might have wondered why that is. Let's try and figure this out. This is the inside of a dog's body, and this is its heart. This is how a dog's heart beats normally. Now let's take a look at what happens when a dog eats chocolate. Notice anything? Yep. When a dog eats chocolate, it can make its heart beat faster than it normally should. And that's not all. Chocolate makes other parts of its body have to work harder too, which isn't good. All this overworking can start to make a dog feel really sick. Some dogs who eat chocolate even have to go to the vet. Unfortunately, even a little chocolate can make a dog sick, and it's all because of these, cocoa beans. Cocoa beans are what they make chocolate out of. Those beans are what makes chocolate taste so good, but they're also the reason why dogs can't eat it. That's because cocoa beans have some chemicals in them that can be harmful. When we eat chocolate, our bodies break down those chemicals really fast. So chocolate is fine for us, but dogs are different from humans. Their bodies can't break down the harmful chemicals in chocolate like we can. And that means the chemicals just stay there for hours and hours, making their hearts beat too fast for too long and also making other parts of their bodies work

hard too, which can cause a dog to get sick. So in summary, different animals can and can't eat different things. Like some animals can eat eucalyptus leaves or even venomous rattlesnakes, while others definitely can't. The same goes for dogs and humans. Dogs can't eat chocolate because their bodies have a hard time breaking down the harmful chemicals in cocoa beans. Well, our bodies can break down those chemicals no problem, making chocolate safe for us to eat. That's all for this week's question. Thanks, Valentina, for asking it.