

# My dog has eaten something harmful

## Overview

In the wild dogs are scavengers, meaning they'll eat whatever they can find. Some pet dogs are the same and will eat anything they find lying around.

There are lots of foods, items and substances in the house and environment that can poison dogs or block their guts.

Treatment and outcome varies a lot depending on what it is your dog has chosen to eat.

**Contact your vet immediately if your dog has eaten something harmful. Acting fast could save your dog's life.**

## Toxins, poisons and harmful items for dogs

There are many substances that are toxic, poisonous or harmful to dogs in the house, garden and environment, such as cleaning products, human medicines, poisonous plants, antifreeze and foods (e.g. chocolate, grapes and onions).

Dogs also love to eat strange items which can cause gut blockages. Bones, rubber toys, stones, socks, underwear and baby's dummies are just a few examples. The list is endless!

Gut blockages are very serious and can kill a dog if not treated quickly.

**Contact your vet immediately if you think your dog has eaten something harmful.**

## Symptoms

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Twitching
- Sleeping more or being quieter than usual
- Not wanting to eat
- Standing with a hunched back or adopting a 'bowing' or 'prayer' position due to tummy pain
- Straining and not being able to poo (constipation).

Some dogs will vomit but the vast majority won't show any signs immediately after eating something they shouldn't have. It usually takes a day or two for symptoms to develop (depending on what they've eaten).

**If you think that your dog may have eaten something harmful contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment.**

## Should I try to make my dog vomit?

No, never try to make your dog vomit unless your vet specifically asks you to do so. It can make the situation much worse and you may end up harming your dog.

## When to contact your vet

Contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment if your dog has eaten something they shouldn't have. Never wait to see if a problem develops - your dog could become very ill or even die without treatment. Acting fast could save your dog's life.

**You know your dog best. Even if you're unsure whether or not they have eaten something that may harm them, if they're not themselves or you are concerned it's always best to contact your vet.**

## Treatment options

Treatment depends entirely on what your dog has eaten, and may include:

- Making your dog vomit
- Activated charcoal in a meal (this is a liquid that helps absorb any remaining toxins, excess gas and fluids)
- Keeping them overnight on a drip to give them fluids
- Blood tests
- A medication to help reverse or prevent the effects of the toxin your dog has eaten
- X-rays
- An ultrasound scan of their tummy
- An emergency operation to remove a blockage

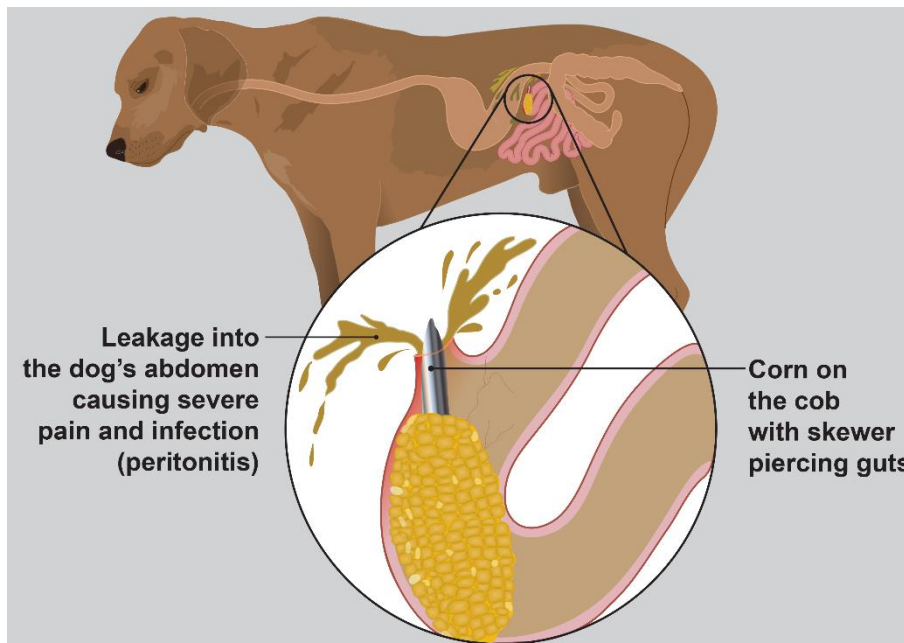
## Outlook

### Toxins and poisons

- The outcome depends entirely on what your dog has eaten and whether they get the appropriate veterinary treatment.
- Most dogs that receive veterinary treatment quickly make a good recovery.
- Unfortunately some dogs, even with the correct treatment develop problems from eating toxic substances. These problems vary depending on what your dog has eaten.

## Gut blockages

- Having a gut blockage is a very serious condition that can be fatal if left without veterinary treatment. Often your dog will need an emergency operation to remove the item.
- Unfortunately, even with the correct treatment, it is common for dogs to develop complications after a gut blockage.



*Gut blockages can lead to serious complications*

## Why do dogs eat things they shouldn't?

### Curiosity

Dogs explore the world with their mouths. Sometimes they can accidentally swallow the things they pick up out of curiosity.

### Boredom

Dogs are very intelligent animals and they can get bored easily. They might fill their time by chewing on or tearing up things in your house, swallowing something they shouldn't in the process.

### **Lack of nutrients**

Some dogs have a taste for things that we don't think of as food, such as poo. This can be a sign that they're missing out on important nutrients. Speak to your vet for advice.

### **Stress**

If your dog is stressed out, they might comfort themselves by chewing on something they shouldn't.

### **Attention**

Did they get a lot of fuss and attention last time they ate something they shouldn't have? Your dog might have learnt that eating a toy or chowing down on your slippers makes them the center of attention!

## **How can I stop my dog eating things they shouldn't?**

Visit our website for tips on "How to stop your dog eating things they shouldn't".

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