

My dog has eaten something harmful

Overview

- Many dogs scavenge and will eat anything they find lying around.
- It's important to monitor your dog closely in case they swallow something that could poison or block them.
- **Contact your vet immediately if your dog has eaten something harmful. Acting fast could save your dog's life.**
- Treatment and outcome varies a lot depending on what your dog has chosen to eat.

Toxins and poisons

Cleaning products, medicines, poisonous plants, antifreeze, chocolate, grapes, onions - the list goes on. Potentially poisonous products around the house and garden should be kept out of your dog's reach.

Blockage risks

Bones, rubber toys, stones, socks, underwear and baby's dummies are just a few examples of items removed from dogs at PDSA Pet Hospitals. 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.

When to contact your vet

Acting fast could save your dog's life. Contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment if your dog has eaten something harmful. Never wait to see if a problem develops - your dog could become very ill or even die without treatment.

You know your dog - even if you're not quite sure whether they have eaten something harmful, if you're concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Symptoms

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Twitching
- Low energy (lethargy)
- Reduced appetite
- Standing with a hunched back or adopting a 'bowing' or 'prayer' position due to tummy pain
- Constipation (straining or not being able to poo)

Your dog may vomit after eating something harmful, but it's more likely that symptoms will take a couple of days to develop (depending on what they has eaten).

Contact your vet immediately for an emergency appointment if you think that your dog may have eaten something harmful.

Should I try to make my dog vomit?

Never try to make your dog vomit unless your vet specifically tells you to do so. If your dog has swallowed

something harmful, your vet may give them an injection to make them sick but they will only do this if they are confident that it's safe to do so.

Treatment

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

- An injection to make them sick (given by your vet - never try to make your dog vomit unless your vet specifically tells you to)
- Activated charcoal in a meal (helps absorb any remaining toxins and gas)
- An overnight stay on a fluid drip
- Blood tests
- Any medicines that may help reduce the effects of the substance they've eaten
- X-rays
- An ultrasound scan of their tummy
- An emergency operation

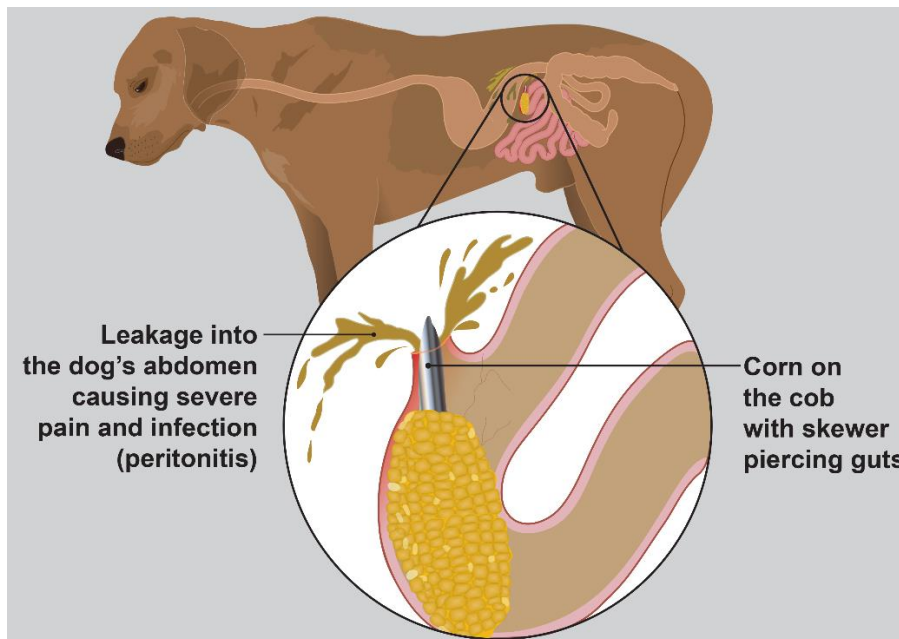
Outlook

Toxins and poisons

- Chances of recovery and /or long term effects, depends on what your dog has eaten.
- Dogs that receive prompt treatment from a vet are more likely to make a good recovery.
- Unfortunately, some dogs (even with the correct treatment) develop long-term problems after eating toxic substances.

Gut blockages

- The quicker you take your dog to your vet, the better their chance of recovering without complications.
- A gut blockage is a very serious condition that can be deadly without veterinary treatment. It's likely that your dog will need an emergency operation to remove the item.
- Even with the correct treatment, it's possible that your dog may develop complications due to a gut blockage.
- Read more: 'Gut blockages in dogs'.



Why do dogs eat things they shouldn't?

Curiosity

Dogs explore the world with their mouths and sometimes they accidentally swallow the things they pick up.

Boredom

Dogs are very intelligent animals that get bored easily. If your dog fills his / her time by chewing, they may swallow 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, they might comfort themselves by chewing on something they shouldn't.

Attention

Did your dog 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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