

FOREIGN BODIES IN DOGS

Small objects can cause big problems.

Dogs explore the world with their mouths. Swallowing non-food items (foreign bodies) can cause choking, blockages or serious injury to the digestive tract.

Early detection and treatment can save your dog's life.



? WHAT IS A FOREIGN BODY?

A foreign body is any object that a dog chews, swallows or has lodged in its mouth, throat, stomach or intestines that should not be there.

Common items include:

- Toys or toy parts
- Socks, clothing, fabric
- Bones, rawhide or antlers
- Stones, pebbles or sticks
- Corn cobs, fruit pits or seeds
- Plastic, rubber or other household items



! SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

- Vomiting or dry heaving
- Loss of appetite
- Drooling or pawing at the mouth
- Coughing, gagging or choking
- Abdominal pain or bloating
- Restlessness or pacing
- Straining to defecate
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Collapse, weakness or lethargy
- Refusing food or water



Signs may be mild at first but can worsen quickly if a blockage or perforation occurs.

Q POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS



Blockages

Objects can get stuck in the oesophagus, stomach or intestines, preventing food, water and gas from passing.



Tissue damage

Sharp or long objects can cause cuts, ulcers or tears in the digestive tract.



Perforation

A hole in the stomach or intestine can lead to leakage of contents into the abdomen, causing a life-threatening infection.



Severe illness or death

Complications can progress rapidly without prompt veterinary care.

1 WHEN TO SEE YOUR VETERINARIAN

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your dog has swallowed a foreign object or is showing any of the signs listed above.



Seek urgent veterinary care if your dog:

- Is choking or having difficulty breathing
- Is vomiting repeatedly or cannot keep anything down
- Has a swollen or painful abdomen
- Is weak, collapsed or unresponsive
- Has not passed stool or gas for more than 24 hours

2 HOW FOREIGN BODIES ARE DIAGNOSED

Your veterinarian may recommend:

- Physical examination
- X-rays to locate the object
- Ultrasound if X-rays are inconclusive
- Blood tests to assess overall health



Not all foreign bodies show up on X-rays. Diagnosis is based on your dog's signs and our clinical findings.

3 TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment depends on the location, type and severity of the foreign body.

- Endoscopic removal – for objects in the stomach or oesophagus
- Surgical removal – for objects causing blockages or complications in the intestines or other areas
- Supportive care – IV fluids, pain relief, and antibiotics if needed
- Hospitalisation – may be required depending on the severity

PREVENTION TIPS

- ✓ Keep small objects, toys and socks out of reach
- ✓ Supervise your dog during playtime
- ✓ Provide safe, appropriate chew toys
- ✓ Avoid giving bones, especially cooked bones
- ✓ Teach a strong "leave it" or "drop it" command
- ✓ Remove broken or damaged toys
- ✓ Regularly check your home and yard for hazards



DID YOU KNOW?

Some dogs swallow foreign objects out of boredom, anxiety, or due to a medical condition called pica (an abnormal appetite).

If you're concerned about your dog's behaviour, talk to your veterinarian.

