



What to Know Before Giving Pets

Bones and Rawhides

Kongs, Nylabones, Bully Sticks, Rawhides.....All fur-parents love to spoil their 'kids' with these fun delicious treats, and let's face it most pets won't turn them down. This article will hopefully help you know how to pick the right chew toy/treat for your pets.

Things to Consider:

- **Age**
 - Puppy: small, sharp teeth. Most puppy toys are made of hard rubber so as to not damage the teeth and gums, help with teething pains, and stimulate chewing on appropriate items (i.e. not furniture and people fingers).
 - Adult: Stronger jaws that can easily chew through certain materials if they wanted to. These teeth however can't be replaced like when they were puppies, so care should be taken as to the material being chewed on.

- **Size/ Breed:**



- Large breed dogs shouldn't get chewies or toys made for smaller breeds.
 - These can easily be chewed up and larger pieces swallowed that could cause intestinal blockages.
 - *Most toys sold at stores are labeled for the appropriate dog size.*
 - If the chewie/treat is meant to be eaten be careful of caloric intake – don't give a Yorkie a dental stick made for a 50 pound dog.
- Again most chewing treats are labeled for certain sizes.

- **Material:**

- Digestible or Not – Nylabones are not meant to be eaten whereas Greenies are meant to be chewed and ingested.
- Flavorings/ Ingredients:
 - If your pet has certain protein allergies make sure to *read the label*.
 - *Avoid items made in China* as much as possible as many illnesses have been related to "Made in China" products.
- Tartar Control: If made to be a dental chew these *should only be given as directed*. Giving more chews per day than recommended or giving a chew that is made for a larger dog can cause GI upset.





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- If going for tartar control make sure to look for the *VOHC label* on the packaging – this signifies that the Veterinary Oral Health Council has shown that the chew can reduce tartar build-up.
- Abrasive material (cloth, hard bone, etc) can wear the teeth down and cause issues later in life.



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All Items Have Warnings

- ✓ **Rawhides**
 - Once moistened they can become more pliable and are easily swallowed which **can be choked on or cause an intestinal blockage.**
 - Moist rawhides or rawhides that have been chewed on, left for a period of time and then chewed on again *are likely full of harmful bacteria* that can cause GI upset, vomiting, diarrhea, or pancreatitis.
 - The flavorings on rawhides can cause problems in dogs with food allergies, many are made in China, and/or can cause stains to the floor, carpet, or carpet when wet.
- ✓ **Nylabones**
 - Are great for the strong chewer if the dog is given an appropriately sized bone.
 - However after lots of chewing the edges can become sharp and cut into the

Nylabone® Bone Sizes



gums.

- ✓ **Kongs, rubber, silicone, and tough plastic bones.**
 - Despite claims.....**NOTHING is indestructible.**
 - Some designs can also become stuck on your pets jaw or tongue.
- ✓ **Antlers and Bones**
 - Have the potential to break into small pieces that can cause choking hazard or GI blockage.
 - Also have potential to chip/break teeth with aggressive chewers.

This article was not meant to scare anyone away from giving your pet items to chew on but only that you should be aware of the potential hazards that can come with them. I have given my pets every item listed above but I take precautions with each. For example when I used to give rawhides (however I like bully sticks and beef tracheas more now) I always bought non-



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flavored ones and I preferred the braids or twists because there was a decreased chance that the stick could be swallowed whole as can happen with the flat ones. I also threw away the rawhide once they had chewed it down to a 'swallowable' size or if they walked away from it (*remember moist rawhides are breeding grounds for bacteria*).

If I am trying out a new chewie I always give them to my fur-babies at a time when I will be around to watch them so that I can see if they chew them appropriately and that they don't break them up into sizes that can be choked on. If I am not absolutely sure that my dogs can't choke or swallow large chunks of the chew toy/treat I will not leave them unattended with it.

