

THE DOG CARE

Blueprint



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#1: WRONG DOG FOOD



You only want the best for your furry friend.

So you may be confused when it comes to food.

As there are many choices to pick from.

For example:

- Wet or dry.
- Commercial or homemade dog food.
- Premium brand or a more affordable one.

And the list goes on.

Now, most dog food in the market meets [the minimum nutritional needs of our furry friends](#).

Also, there are many homemade diet recipes on the Internet.

But let me remind you:

There's no '*one-size-fits-all*' formula.

It's because every dog has a unique set of needs.

And it'll be based on 5 factors:

- Age.
- Size.
- Breed.
- Life stage.
- Physical activity level.

So if your furry friend's current diet doesn't meet these requirements...

There are some risks you should be aware about.

7 consequences of feeding your dog the wrong food

Risk #1: Behavioral issues

How your furry friend acts is affected by:

- Hormones.
- *Neurotransmitters* - the body's chemical messengers.

And what your doggo eats influences these 2.

A study proves this with its findings:¹

Protein and tryptophan

Dogs who had a low protein diet with *tryptophan* became less aggressive with their territory.

It's an amino acid.

And it's connected to the production of:

- *Serotonin* - controls mood, sleep, and digestion.
- *Melatonin* - a hormone that controls your day-night cycles.

On the other hand...

The dogs fed a high-protein diet without the said amino acid showed higher aggression.

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

You'll find this fatty acid in cold-water fish.

It's known to sharpen the mind.

And improve the function of the '*retina*.'

Which is the part of the eye that receives light.

So puppies who take this nutrient are more trainable than those who don't.

Fiber

Lastly, dogs fed with fiber-rich meals had lesser *energy intake*.

This is the total calories or energy of foods consumed.

Meaning dogs ate fewer carbs.

And it's because eating fiber makes you full.

Which helps prevent a dog from overeating.

As well as displaying signs of discomfort due to hunger.

Risk #2: Food allergy or intolerance

Like humans, some dogs may feel sick after eating a specific ingredient.

This could be due to 2 reasons:

Food allergy

It's when the immune system '*overreacts*' to food that shouldn't be causing issues in the first place.²

The top culprit in dogs is protein - particularly beef.

Check out the commonly reported allergens below:³

Food	Percentage of allergic dogs (From greatest to least)
Beef	34%
Dairy products	17%
Chicken	15%
Wheat	13%
Lamb	5%

Food intolerance

Unlike a food allergy, this doesn't involve the immune system.

Instead, it mainly affects the stomach.

So this causes less severe effects than allergies.

And dairy's one of the common food intolerance in dogs.

“But why?”

At birth, puppies get the nutrients they need from their mother's milk.

For this, they produce an enzyme called *lactase*.

It breaks down ‘*lactose*’ or sugar in the milk.

But as dogs age, they’ll release less of the said enzyme.

Which makes it harder to digest lactose.

Thus, if your furry friend drank too much milk...

Chances are, they’ll end up with an upset stomach within 12 hours or more.

“How are these conditions connected to my dog's diet?”

Wet food and kibbles come in various colors or shapes.

So you may think they're all the same.

However, if you look carefully at their packaging...

Some products have different nutrient sources.

For example, the brand you used before has a plant-based protein.

Say soy or corn.

But the product you recently bought has an animal-based one.

It could be:

- Beef.
- Lamb.

- Chicken.

Now, your furry friend may have an unpleasant reaction to the new protein source.

And they might show the signs below:

- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Excessive pooping.
- Itchiness (on the ears, face, feet).

Risk #3: Obesity

Did you know that 34.1% of the adult dog population in the US is overweight?⁴

Studies show that meals high in fat can easily cause obesity in humans and fur babies.⁵

But aside from greasy table scraps...

This problem can also be due to:

- Lack of exercise.
- Wrong feeding habits.
- Excessive carbohydrates.

How does obesity affect dogs?

First, it lowers your furry friend's quality of life.

Second, it may also shorten it by 2 ½ years.⁶

And it's because overweight dogs are more prone to several health issues, such as:

- Diabetes.
- Heart diseases.
- Bladder stones.

Besides these, excess weight also adds more stress to the bones and joints.

Which then worsens problems, such as:

- Arthritis.
- Hip dysplasia.

How to know if your dog's obese?

It's when their body weight's at least 15% above ideal.⁷

"What's the ideal weight for my dog?"

Our furry pals come in different sizes and body types.

So it'll depend on their:

- Age.
- Breed.
- Gender.

So, simply comparing your dog to others can be inaccurate.

Some signs your dog might be obese are:

- Being inactive.
- Moving with difficulty.
- Having trouble walking.
- Eating their food quickly.

The easiest way to tell if your dog is obese...

Would be to look at their body from the top and the side.

Their weight is ideal if the:

- Belly is tucked up.
- Outline of the ribs is visible.

However, if your dog has thick and long fur, it may interfere with the view.

That's why for proper assessment, visit your vet.

Risk #4: Diabetes

1 out of every 300 dogs has this condition.⁸

So it's a common disease in our furry friends. Especially in female and middle-aged ones.

“Why does this happen to dogs?”

Diabetes occurs when their bodies:

- Don't produce enough *insulin*.
- Can't use the said hormone well like before.

Insulin is responsible for regulating blood sugar levels. Its most important function is to allow the cells of the body to use glucose as energy.

And these could be due to the following factors:

- Obesity.
- High-fat diet.
- Pancreatitis.

Signs of a diabetic dog

- Weakness.
- Weight loss.
- Excessive peeing.
- Extreme thirstiness.
- Cataracts or cloudy eyes.



Note: This condition can also be inherited. And dog breeds that are prone to diabetes are:⁹

- Pugs.
- Samoyeds.
- Toy poodles.
- Miniature Poodles.
- Miniature Schnauzers.

Risk #5: Pancreatitis

The pancreas releases 3 enzymes:

- *Lipase.*
- *Amylase.*
- *Protease.*

They help break down nutrients in the intestine.

Say proteins, starches, and fat.

Now, this is the standard setup in healthy dogs.

But if your dog has this condition...

The enzymes will start working even before they reach the small intestine.

As a result, the pancreas will '*digest*' itself.

Then cause it to swell.

"How do dogs get this?"

The exact cause's unknown for 90% of its cases.¹⁰

But it's linked to eating food high in fat.

Signs of pancreatitis in dogs

- Anorexia.
- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Weakness.
- Dehydration.
- Stomach pain.

Risk #6: Nutritional imbalance

Since not all dogs require the same amount of nutrients...

You may unknowingly give your dog less or more than needed.

And this can result in disorders:

Nutritional excess/deficiency		Effects
Calcium	Excess	<i>Osteochondrosis</i> - unusual cartilage growth. <i>Hypertrophic osteodystrophy</i> - swelling of joints. <i>Hypercalcemia</i> - abnormally high calcium levels in the blood.

	Deficiency	<i>Hypocalcemia</i> - lower than normal calcium levels.
Vitamin D	Excess	Poisoning (due to eating pesticides that kill rodents, vitamin D supplements)
	Deficiency ¹²	<i>Rickets</i> - bone deformation. <i>Osteomalacia</i> - bone softening. Increased risk of congestive heart failure.
Phosphorus	Excess	<i>Hyperphosphatemia</i> - high phosphorus levels in the blood.
	Deficiency ¹³	Heart issues. Stunted growth. Bone and muscle pain.

This problem's often a result of:

- Overfeeding.
- Underfeeding.
- Unbalanced homemade diet.
- Poor quality commercial dry food.

Speaking of homemade meals...

I remember the story of a 6-month-old female puppy, named '*Mia*'.¹⁴

Her parents gave her homemade food for 4 months.

The recipe used was from a dog website.

And Mia's parents made some changes to the diet without asking a vet.

But later on, the dog appeared to be in pain.

Then, the vets diagnosed her of:

- Fractures.
- Vitamin D deficiency.
- *Hyperparathyroidism* - excessive parathyroid hormone.

Hyperparathyroidism causes the bones to lose calcium, and increases calcium levels in the blood. This leads to bone pain and kidney problems.

How to spot a dog with nutritional imbalance

- Dull coat.
- Scaly skin.
- Bad breath.
- Stunted growth.
- Excessive shedding.
- Extreme weight loss/gain.
- Frequent allergies and infections.

Risk #7: Weak immunity

Have you heard that 70% of your immune system's in your tummy?¹⁵

Inside your gut are '*microbes*.'

These bacteria help in:

- Digestion.
- Immune defense.

And they're affected by what you eat.

How?

To boost your dog's defense from illnesses...

They need these nutrients:¹⁶

- Zinc.
- Copper.
- Selenium.
- Vitamin A.
- Vitamin C.
- Vitamin E.
- Folic acid (B9)
- Pantothenic acid (B5)
- Fatty oils and acids (e.g., omega 3).

So if your fur baby doesn't get enough of these from their diet...

They'll have weaker immunity.

Which makes them prone to infections.

How to choose the right food for your furry friend

Tip #1: Ensure your dog's diet fits their life stage

As said earlier, their food requirements change as they grow.

So a puppy's nutritional needs are different from an adult dog's.

For growth and development, puppies (below 1 year) require more calories.

And a higher level of:

- Fat.
- Protein.
- Minerals.

Many puppy formulas have extra nutrients, too, like *omega-3*.

Which helps in the development of the brain.¹⁷

Then, as dogs get older...

Their *metabolism*, or the process of converting food to energy, slows down.¹⁸

Thus, to avoid obesity, adults need a diet with:

- Less fat.
- Fewer calories.

You already know how excessive weight can lead to many health risks.

Say diabetes and heart diseases.


So putting your older dog on a low-calorie diet may help prevent those conditions.

As long as their food still provides them with enough nutrients.

Daily calorie intake of dogs per life stage:¹⁹

Dog type	Daily calorie intake (in kilocalories/kcal)				
	10 lb (4.54 kg)	30 lb (13.61 kg)	50 lb (22.68 kg)	70 lb (31.75 kg)	90 lb (40.82 kg)
Puppies	990				
Less active dogs	296	674	989	1,272	1,540
Active adult dogs	404	922	1,353	1,740	2,100

Pregnant dogs	518	1,274	1,940	2,570	3,170
Active young adult dogs	436	993	1,451	1,876	2,264
Active senior dogs	327	745	1,093	1,407	1,700

 **Note:** These numbers may vary based on your dog's condition. So consult your vet about any diet changes.

“What about protein and minerals?”

Do adult dogs need less of them too?”

Older ones need slightly lower protein and minerals. *(See the table below.)*

The minimum requirements for dog food set by AAFCO:²⁰

Nutrient (% or per kg of food)	For puppies, pregnant, and nursing dogs (Minimum)	For adult dogs (Minimum)	For adult dogs (Maximum)
Protein (%)	22.0	18.0	
Fat (%)	8.0	5.0	
Calcium (%)	1.0	0.6	2.5
Phosphorus (%)	0.8	0.5	1.6
Potassium (%)	0.6	0.6	
Sodium (%)	0.3	0.06	

Chloride (%)	0.45	0.09	
Magnesium (%)	0.04	0.04	0.3
Iron (mg/kg)	80	80	3,000
Copper (mg/kg)	7.3	7.3	250
Manganese (mg/kg)	5.0	5.0	
Zinc (mg/kg)	120	120	1,000
Iodine (mg/kg)	1.5	1.5	50
Selenium (mg/kg)	0.11	0.11	2
Vitamin A (IU/kg)	5,000	5,000	250,000
Vitamin D (IU/kg)	500	500	5,000
Vitamin E (IU/kg)	50	50	1,000
Thiamine (mg/kg)	1.0	1.0	
Riboflavin (mg/kg)	2.2	2.2	
Pantothenic acid (mg/kg)	10	10	
Niacin (mg/kg)	11.4	11.4	
Pyridoxine (mg/kg)	1.0	1.0	
Folic acid (mg/kg)	0.18	0.18	
Vitamin B ₁₂ (mg/kg)	0.022	0.022	
Choline (mg/kg)	1,200	1,200	



Note: IU/kg means international unit per kilogram (kg). It's the accepted amount of a substance worldwide. Also, the data above isn't per kilogram of your dog's body weight. It's either per % or kg of their diet.

I'll mention AAFCO many times in the other tips below.

So here's a brief intro.

The *Association of American Feed Control Officials*, a.k.a. AAFCO, is a nonprofit organization.

It doesn't directly test pet food (*the Food and Drug Administration or FDA does*).

But it sets the standard nutritional requirements of those products.

Now, going back to the topic.

The amount of protein and minerals may also depend on your dog's condition.

For example, dogs prone to or with kidney disease will have a diet with:

- 14-20% protein.
- 0.2-0.5% phosphorus.²¹

However, there are some exceptions to this.

Diet for pregnant or nursing dogs

Vets may suggest puppy food for an adult female dog if she's in either of these situations:

- Pregnant.
- Nursing a litter.

It's because she needs higher energy and nutrients to:

- Keep her litter healthy.
- Produce nourishing milk.
- Have more energy to take care of her babies.



Note: Female dogs who give birth have higher nutrient demands than pregnant ones.

What to do?

To know if your dog's food suits their age and life stage...

Check the dog food label for the nutrient profile.

Thanks to AAFCO, it's easy to know which life stage a product is for.

Since puppies and adults have different needs, they made 2 '*nutrient profiles*.'

And to tell them apart, you only have to look for the following keywords:

- "*For (adult) maintenance*" - adult dogs.
- "*For growth and reproduction*" - puppies, pregnant and nursing females.

"Help! My dog's food says 'for all life stages.'"

What does it mean?"

AAFCO only has 2 nutrient profiles. (*The ones I mentioned above.*)

But some brands may also market their product to be “*for all life stages.*”


It means that the food met the minimum requirements for:

- Puppies.
- Breeding and whelping female dogs.

These dogs need higher levels of nutrients.

So this formula may fit the needs of some healthy full-grown dogs.

However, it can be too much for an average adult dog. As the diet’s high in calories and nutrients.

 **Warning:** If your furry friend has a pre-existing illness or if they need to maintain weight... It’ll be risky to give them products for all life stages.

“When should I shift from puppy to adult food?”

You should do it when your puppy's about 80% of their adult size.²²

However, maturity doesn’t happen at the same age for all dogs.

That’s why it’ll depend on their size and breed:

Size/breed of dog	Age
Small	9-10 months old
Medium	12 months old
Large and giant	12-16 months old

“I’m unsure of my dog’s age.

When should I switch, then?"

Get advice from your vet. As they can tell you your dog's approximate age.



Note: Avoid suddenly changing your dog's meals to avoid upsetting their stomach. Check out '[#2: Abrupt diet changes](#)' for more tips.

Tip #2: Feed your dog according to their breed

Apart from age, size is another factor when choosing the right diet.

"Wait. Does this only mean that bigger dogs need more food?"

It may seem like that due to their size.

But in reality, it's the opposite.

Large and giant breeds need fewer calories and certain nutrients

Due to their size and fast growth, they're at high risk of joint and bone problems.²³

So compared to smaller dogs, they need fewer:²⁴

- Calories.
- Calcium.
- Phosphorus.

Because they're still young, puppies can't control their calcium levels yet.

That being said, any excess may result in abnormal bone growth or deformations.

Now, calcium goes hand in hand with phosphorus.

So these 2 minerals must be in good ratio for your dog's healthy bones.²⁵

Nutrient	Daily intake for large-breed puppies (per kg of dog food)
Calcium ²⁶	1.8%
Calcium : Phosphorus ratio	1:1 to 2:1 ²⁷

Also, even though large and giant breeds have big bodies...

They need less fat than smaller puppies.

Eating too many calories can make them grow faster than normal.

So their weight may put too much stress on their bones.

And this might make them more prone to:

- Arthritis.
- Hip joint issues.

For this, some vets or breeders may recommend giving adult food to a large-breed puppy.

As it has less fat and calcium than puppy formulas.

On the other hand, despite their tinier bodies...

Small-breed puppies have faster metabolism

They easily burn their food within minutes or hours.

Also, smaller breeds have tinier stomachs.

So they can't eat much food just to get the daily calories they need.

Thus, unlike larger dogs...

Small-breed puppies need a diet denser in calories.

And you have to feed them little meals - 3 to 4 times daily.

Because if they don't get enough calories, they might suffer from 'hypoglycemia.' Or low blood sugar levels.

"What about small and large-sized adult dogs?"

Adult small breeds still have a faster metabolism than bigger dogs.

So, in general:

The former need a diet with higher calories per pound than the latter.

For reference, here's the ideal daily calorie intake for healthy adult dogs:²⁸

Dog's weight	Kilocalories/kcal per day
11 lb (5 kg)	280-351
22 lb (10 kg)	470-590
33 lb (15 kg)	640-800
44 lb (20 kg)	790-993
55 lb (25 kg)	940-1,174
66 lb (30 kg)	1,080-1,346
77 lb (35 kg)	1,210-1,511
88 lb (40 kg)	1,340-1,670

99 lb (45 kg)	1,460-1,824
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If you look at the table above...

A 33-lb (15-kg) adult dog needs 800 kcal daily at most.

Meanwhile, it's 1,460-1,824 kcal for a 99-lb (45-kg) larger one.


At first glance, the amount for a large breed's higher than for smaller dogs.

But if you divide the total calories by the pound of their body weight, you'll see the difference:

- 800 kcal/33 lb = 24 kcal/lb.
- 1,824 kcal/99 lb = 18.42 kcal/lb.

So, a 33-lb (15-kg) dog requires 24 kcal/lb.

On the contrary, a 99-lb (45-kg) dog only needs 18.42 kcal/lb.

 **Note:** The data above are only for average adult dogs in good shape. For puppies, your vet can examine your dog. And give them the right daily calorie intake for their breed and condition.

When will you consider a dog a large/giant breed?

If your dog's an adult, you can use the data below for reference:

Size of dog	Weight
Small to medium	<50 lb (23 kg)
Large	>50 lb (23 kg)
Giant	> 99 lb (45 kg)

What to do?

There's only 1 nutrient profile for puppies.

So in 2016, the AAFCO made a new guideline:

Size/breed	AAFCO statement
For small breeds	<i>“...except for growth of large-size dogs (70 lbs/32 kg or more as an adult)”</i>
For large and giant breeds	<i>“...including growth of large-size dogs (70 lbs/32 kg or more as an adult)”</i>



Note: Watch out for the words “including” (for large breeds) and “except” (for small dogs).

How much food should you give to your dog?

Talk with your vet about this. They can adjust the serving per meal that fits your dog’s age and activity level.

Or read the product's packaging carefully.

Besides the amount...

The product’s label must also show how many times you should feed your dog.

But normally, the feeding times are like this:

Type of dog	Feeding time per day
Small breed puppies	4-6 meals
Medium-size puppies	3 meals

Large breed puppies	3-4 meals
Adult dogs	2 meals (around 12 hours apart)

Tip #3: Give balanced meals to your dog

Once you're confident that your fur baby's diet suits their life stage and breed...

The next question would be:

"Does it provide all the nutrients they need?"

To verify this, never judge (a) dog food by its packaging.

It's easy for companies to put the words *"complete"* or *"100% nutrition"* on their labels.

However, it may not be the actual case for some.

So to help you find balanced dog food...

The easiest thing you can do is to:

Look for the AAFCO statement²⁹

Reference type	Sample statement
Nutritional adequacy statement	<i>"[Product's name] is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles for [life stage]."</i>
Passed a feeding trial with AAFCO guidelines	<i>"Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that [product's name] provides complete and balanced nutrition for [life stage]."</i>



Note: You'll often find these paragraphs near the ingredients list - on the back label. But they can also be elsewhere on the pack or can.

Both statements say which life stage the dog food is for.

But the 1st reference type proves the product has the minimum requirements of AAFCO.

Meanwhile, the 2nd statement claims that the dog food passed a '*feeding trial*.'

"What is it?"

Testers will feed the said product to healthy dogs for at least 26 weeks.³⁰

Then afterward, vets will check their condition.

Especially if there are changes in their:

- *Blood*.
- *Weight* - no loss greater than 15% of a dog's original body weight.
- *Behavior* - not showing any signs of nutrient excess or deficiency.

If the dog food passes the trial...

It'll have the 2nd statement in the table above.

However, here's the thing:

A product can pass a feeding trial even if it doesn't have the minimum nutritional needs by AAFCO.

How's that possible?

It's mostly the case for '*veterinary therapeutic diets*.'

These are special food for dogs with certain illnesses, such as:

- Allergies.
- Diabetes.
- Liver disorders.
- Kidney ailments.

Due to the dogs' condition, these may have fewer nutrients than what AAFCO set.

But despite this, the amounts were carefully studied by nutritionists not to cause any harm to an ill dog.

Thus, these special diets can have an AAFCO statement.

Now, if the dog food doesn't fit any of the 2 statements...

They'll have a label that says:

"This product is intended for intermittent and supplemental feeding only."



Note: Avoid products like this as you're looking for a complete meal for your dog.

Also, apart from looking at the statement...

Check the 'guaranteed analysis'

It's the table at the back of most dog food. And it shows the percentage of these 4 main components of diet:

- Fat.
- Fiber.
- Protein.
- Moisture (water).

It's like a guarantee that the product has the minimum requirements of AAFCO.

So you can compare it to the AAFCO table I showed earlier.



Note: Some companies may include more nutrients on the list other than these 4.

"What about homemade diets?"

How can I ensure they provide complete nutrition to my dog?"

Consult a certified dog nutritionist.

Most home-prepared diets lack at least 1 nutrient.³¹

So, as a result, the dogs may not get all the stuff they need.

Also, never follow a recipe you just saw on the Internet.

What works for another furry pal may not do well on your dog.

Do some 'digging'

You can't find all info on a product's packaging.

So to ensure the dog food's safe and true to its claims...

You have to do more research on the brand or manufacturer.

And study the company's info, such as their:

- Reviews.
- Reputation.
- History and experience.
- Laboratory analysis and trials.

Ask questions to the manufacturer

You can also take your 'digging' to the next level.

As a quote says,

“To seek truth requires one to ask the right questions.”

So contact the manufacturer you see on the product's label.

And ask them these 5 vet-approved questions:^{32,33}

Question #1: Do you have a veterinary nutritionist?

Request the expert's name and qualifications.

He/she must have a Board Certification from the:

- American College of Veterinary Nutrition (ACVN).
- European College of Veterinary Comparative Nutrition (ECVCN).

Question #2: Who formulates your dog food?

Ask about the expert's name and qualifications as well.

The most qualified to develop the diet would be someone with:

- A Board Certification from ACVN or ECVCN.
- An MS/Ph.D. in Animal Nutrition or Food Science and Technology.

Question #3: What quality control/s do you use to ensure your products' grade?

Safety must be the company's priority.

So you may ask about how they:

- Manage recalls.
- Perform nutrient analysis.
- Test the shelf-life of a product.
- Handle raw and cooked ingredients. (*These must be separated.*)

Question #4: Can you give a full nutrient analysis of [product's name]?

This is something you can't find on dog food labels.

If the company is willing to share it, it may reduce your doubts about the product.

Plus, you can study it first before making a purchase.

But if not, look for other dog diets.

Question #5: Do you, by chance, have any research done on your products? And can I access the results in peer-reviewed materials?

This isn't a top requirement.

However, it'd be nice to know the reviews of other experts about the company's products.

Tip #4: Get your vet's advice

This is the first thing you must do to change your furry friend's diet. Or if you have questions about dog nutrition.

Your vet knows your dog's:

- Weight.
- Condition.
- Medical history.

Also, with their experience and access to recent studies...

They know which products may cause allergies. As well as other health problems for some dogs.

So with this info, your vet can give the appropriate diet for your dog. Or help you narrow down your choices.

Tip #5: Assure it's high-quality food

"Expensive" and "premium."

These words may come to your mind if you say *"high-quality."*

But in dog food, what makes a product finer than average?

Look at the ingredients list

Let's say you have 2 products in front of you. And both of them have the following:

- AAFCO statement.
- Minimum nutritional requirements.

However, one diet says *"premium"* on its label. Plus, it's also costlier than the other.

So, is the more expensive dog food worth the extra money?

Well, some pricier products may indeed have higher quality than others.

But let me remind you that it isn't always the case.

A high price with premium packaging doesn't necessarily mean quality.

And the least expensive one may or may not have good nutrition either.

Thus, instead of only looking at their labels...

Judge dog food by their ingredients list.

By doing this, you'll understand a product's quality better.

But to read dog food labels, you must understand these terms first:

Pet food terms³⁴

Term	Description	Examples
<i>"meat"</i>	Fresh meat Usually high quality Contains 75% water Clean flesh from an animal (must be specified)	<i>"Lamb"</i> <i>"Chicken"</i>
<i>"meat meal"</i>	Has only 5%-10% water Dried ground animal meat (must be specified)	<i>"Lamb meal"</i> <i>"Chicken meal"</i>
<i>"animal by-products"</i>	Made from leftover parts of animals like organs (e.g., lungs, kidneys, brain)	<i>"Lamb by-products"</i> <i>"Chicken by-products"</i>
<i>"digest"</i>	Animal materials treated with acid or heat Gives a meaty flavor to dog food without meat	<i>"Lamb digest"</i> <i>"Chicken digest"</i>

How dog food ingredients are listed

Companies arrange them by weight. And the list is from heaviest to lightest.

So if the first thing you see is "*chicken meal*" followed by "*brown rice*,"...

It means that the product contains more chicken than rice. As well as other ingredients.

Thus, your dog can get enough protein from it.

"Meat" vs. "meat meal"

In terms of quality, the former's fresher. Plus, it's less processed than the latter.

So it's safe to say that "*meat*" is of higher quality.

However, since "*meat meal*" is made from cooked animal tissues...

It only has 5%-10% moisture.

Thus, if you measure them dry, "*meat meal*" is more protein-concentrated than "*meat*."

So read the ingredients list carefully.

If it says "*chicken*" then "*corn*,"...

You're not 100% sure about the diet's protein content.

It's because "*meat*" normally contains 75% moisture.

So if you remove the water, the chicken used might be less than the amount of corn.

And you may end up with a grain-based dog food instead of a protein one.

“Meat/meat meal” vs. “by-products”

They're all packed with nutrients.

But *"meat"* and *"meat meal"* are usually made from animal flesh. Like those sold in the market that you consume.

Then what's left in those animals is used to create *"by-products."* Say organs or fatty tissues.

Some companies may use *"by-products"* to reach the minimum protein requirement. As it costs less to produce dog food of this kind.

However, the protein source can be of lower quality. Compared to products with whole *"meat"* or *"meat meal."*⁸⁵

Pick a diet with recognizable ingredients

Some companies may not also say which specific animal they used.

So they'll only list these terms:

- *"meat meal."*
- *"animal meat."*
- *"animal by-products."*

Although this doesn't necessarily mean that their ingredients are unsafe...

You must know the source of whatever you'll give your dog.

So if you want to ensure quality...

Say no to unknown sources. And choose a dog food with detailed ingredients.



Note: Besides the protein source, read the rest of the ingredients. Are most of them unfamiliar to you? If so, research more about them or check out other dog diets.

Compare the ingredient sources

Now, you may have narrowed down your choices. And you're left with 2 products in the dog food aisle.

However, they have similar levels of nutrients, such as:

- Fats.
- Protein.
- Carbohydrates.

In this case, the one with a higher-quality ingredient source wins.

Protein

Your furry friend needs 22 types of amino acids to make enough protein.


However, their body can only produce 12 of those.

So your dog must get the other 10 from their diet. Which are called the *"essential amino acids."*

Now, the problem is...

Not all protein sources are created equal.

Protein source	Description	Examples
Animal-based	Highly digestible by dogs. Complete source of protein.	Dairy products Meat from animals
Plant-based	Inexpensive Poorly digested and absorbed. ³⁶ Has fewer essential amino acids. ³⁷	Soy Oats Barley Quinoa Chickpeas Buckwheat Green peas

 **Note:** Plant proteins are nutritious. But since dogs don't digest them well, they may not absorb most of the nutrients in the food.

So animal meat (e.g., beef, lamb) might be a better choice.

However, ensure your furry friend isn't allergic to it.

Signs of food allergy in dogs include:

- Itchy skin, ears, or paws.
- Digestive issues (such as vomiting and diarrhea).

Carbohydrates

Aside from protein, dogs also use carbohydrates or carbs for energy.

And the most common sources of these in their diet are the following:

- Soy.
- Millet.
- Barley.

- Potato.
- Brown rice.
- Sweet potato.
- Whole wheat.
- Oats (or whole oats).
- Corn (whole, gluten, meal).

Now, which of these ingredients offers more nutrition for your dog?

Looking for the word “*whole*” might help, as it usually means good quality.³⁸

However, whole grains include but are not limited to:

- Millet.
- Barley.
- Brown rice.



Note: Grain-free dog food became popular in the early 2000s. But before switching your dog's diet to this, talk with your vet first if it suits your dog.

Fats

These are a crucial part of your dog's diet.

They keep your dog's fur healthy and shiny. And this is why fats usually make up 10%-15% of their daily meals.

But, these must be in moderation.

Common sources of fats in dog food are:

- Beef fat.

- Pork fat.
- Fish oils.
- Chicken fat.
- Vegetable oil.
- Sunflower oil.



Note: You may also see "animal fat" in some products. Now, that's another mystery item. Same with "animal meat" and "animal by-products."

Think about this.

If the company used a high-quality fat source...

They won't hesitate to show it on their label.

So it's best to avoid dog food with '*animal fat*.' And choose the more specific choices I listed above.

Quick recap:

Some premium dog food truly lives up to their '*high-quality*' claims. While others may not.

On the other hand, there are also less expensive brands that may offer the same nutrition for your dog.

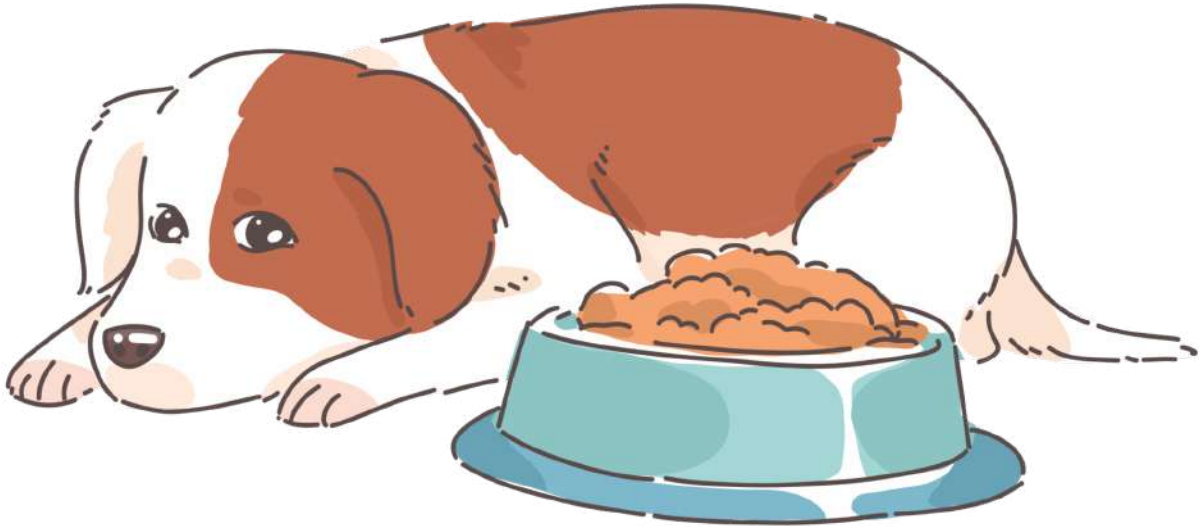
So, to help you choose which one's better for your dog and more worth your money...

Look for a diet with:

- *Good source of protein:* fresh meat from specific animals.

- *Whole, elaborate ingredients:* you must know what you'll feed to your dog.
- *High digestibility:* your dog gets the most out of animal protein nutrient-wise.

#2: ABRUPT DIET CHANGES



Sometimes, your dog needs to switch to a new diet for the following reasons:

- Illness.
- Food allergy.
- Recalled dog food³⁹
- Age (from puppy to adult formula).
- Pregnancy (require a calorie-dense diet).

Now, you may think this process starts and ends with simply giving your dog new food.

But it's more complicated than that.

It's because suddenly switching your dog's diet may upset their tummy.

You see, a dog's gut has many '*microbes*.'

These are microorganisms that help in digestion.

And also in regulating the immune system.

When your dog eats a new diet...

These gut microbes also change.

The new microorganisms will grow in numbers - replacing the old ones.

So with all these things happening inside your dog's tummy, they'll need time to adjust.

Or else your furry pal will show signs of discomfort in the stomach, such as:

- Vomiting.
- Refusing to eat.
- Having watery poop.

What to do?

Dogs' gut microbes become stable after 6 days.⁴⁰

So, slowly transition to a new diet for at least 7 days to avoid upsetting your fur baby's tummy.

Here's how:

1. Introduce the novel food to your dog in small amounts.
2. Slowly increase its servings every 2 days, like this:
 - *1st day*: 75% old dog food, 25% new diet.
 - *3rd day*: 50% old dog food, 50% new diet.
 - *5th day*: 25% old dog food, 75% new diet.
 - *7th day*: 100% new dog food.

But if the reason for the diet change is a recalled dog food, buy another product that's close to it.

Let's say your previous brand has chicken as its main ingredient.

To have a smooth transition...

Pick a dog food that has the same protein source.

And then, do the steps above.



Note: Some of our furry friends may need a longer transition time - up to 10 days. Usually, these are dogs with:

- Food allergies.
- Sensitive stomachs.
- Gastrointestinal disorders.

So, monitor your fur baby after every meal.

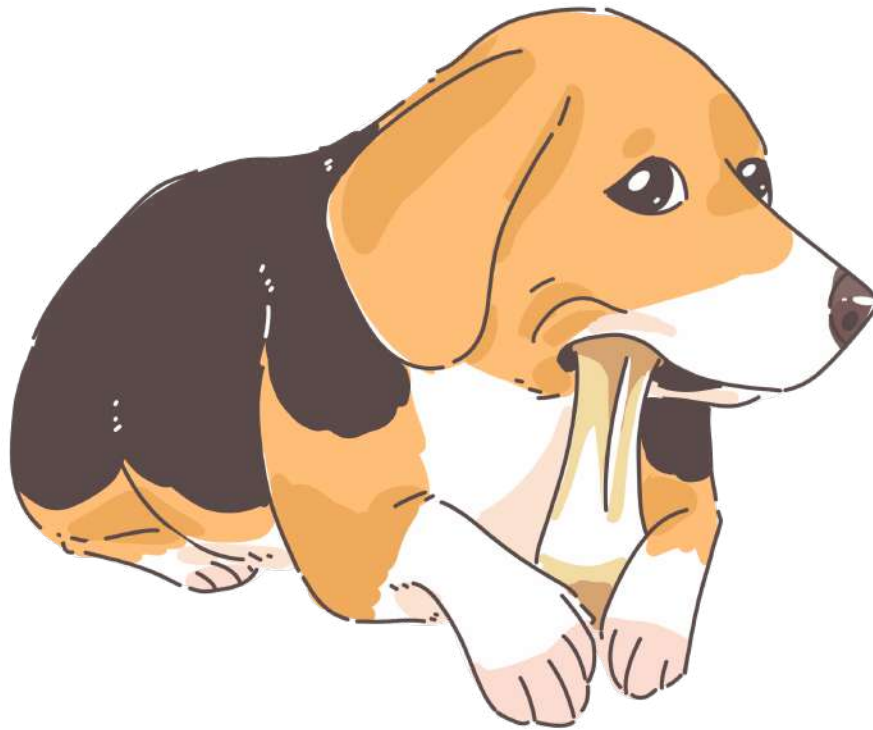
Look out for any changes in their:

- Appetite.
- Behavior.
- Stool consistency (their poop must be firm but not very hard).

If there are any, you may need to transition longer than usual. And reduce the amount of new diet in their meals.

Now, if the signs persist for days, consult with your vet. As your furry pal might be allergic to the new diet or have other conditions.

#3: BONES



In most cartoons, dogs, and bones are inseparable.

So you may think of giving one to your dog for them to play with.

Or let them gnaw on a bone they found in the kitchen trash.

But before doing so, there are some risks you should know about.

Most dogs get foreign objects stuck in their '*esophagus*.'

That's the tube that joins the throat to the stomach.

And 88.6% of the cases are caused by bones.⁴¹

Now, a bone blocking the esophagus may damage the throat tissues.

Also, it can make breathing difficult for dogs too.

But apart from having a clogged esophagus...

Giving bones to your dog has many other hazards, such as:


Choking

Dogs may ingest a small bone by accident.

Or, they might munch on a brittle one and swallow small fragments.

But besides the esophagus, these pieces can also get into their '*trachea*' or windpipe.

Then it can restrict a dog's breathing.

 **Warning:** This is an emergency. So if you suspect your dog of choking, watch out for the signs below and act fast. (*Follow the detailed steps in [#4: Pica](#)*).

- Gagging.
- Distress.
- Retching.
- Coughing.
- Salivation.
- Wheezing.
- Blue or white gums.
- Constant pawing at the mouth.

Trauma

Your dog can break a cooked bone into smaller pieces. And these may hurt their mouth or throat.

Also, if the shards are sharp, they can cause more damage to the body.

Especially once they pass through the other digestive parts. Like the linings of the:


- Stomach.
- Intestines.

Intestinal obstruction

Besides injuries, chunks of bones can also block a dog's intestines.

As a result, their body can't take in nutrients and water.

And it's because liquids and solid food can't pass through their intestines.

 **Warning:** This may lead to *dehydration*. A.k.a the loss of fluids in the body. And it can be fatal if not treated early.

Also, sharp bones can pierce a hole in the intestines over time.

This is likely if the shards keep pressing on the intestines' walls.

Then, fluids may leak into the dog's abdomen.

And like a blocked intestine, a pierced one can also be lethal to your dog. So surgery's the only way to treat this.

To prevent this, observe your dog. Then take note of these signs:

- Vomiting.
- Lethargy.
- Depression.
- Stomach pain.
- Loss of appetite.
- Smacking of lips.
- Diarrhea or constipation.

Fractured or chipped teeth

Some bones may also be too tough and cause your dog's teeth to break.

This isn't common, as most furry friends won't always bite too hard to crack a tooth.

But sometimes it happens, especially:

- If a dog's too excited to gnaw on a new bone.
- If it's a small puppy whose teeth are still growing.

Usually, the most common cause of this is a large beef marrow bone.

It bears the weight of a cow. So this type of bone from a big animal is dense.

And it's thicker than bones from smaller animals, like:⁴²

- Pigs.
- Lambs.
- Turkeys.
- Chickens.



Note: Although there's a different problem with soft poultry bones. And we'll get to this later on.

Aside from bones, reports also include other tough objects, such as:

- Antlers.
- Cow hooves.
- Big rawhide bones.
- Non-bending chew toys.

Now, a cracked or loose tooth will be more sensitive to cold and heat.

Also, the gap inside may attract bacteria that multiply in it.

Then it can result in infection, which is painful for your furry pal.

Common signs of cracked teeth in dogs:

- Pawing at their mouth.
- Swollen part of the face.
- Refusing hard food and treats.
- Avoid being touched in the face.

Oral foreign bodies

As your dog chews on a fragile bone, its pieces may also get between their teeth.

Now, these can make your dog uncomfy.

What's more, they can injure the dog's mouth.

Then wounds may result in an infection.

So, how to know if a dog has an oral foreign body?

They'll display the following symptoms:

- Gagging.
- Salivating.
- Bad breath.
- Refusing to eat.
- Rubbing their faces on the floor or any surface.

Pancreatitis

This is a condition where a dog's *pancreas* becomes swollen.

It's an organ that helps digest food. Plus, it also regulates blood sugar.

And usually, a high-fat diet makes the pancreas swell.

You might think,

“Why’s this connected to dogs chewing on bones?”

Apart from meat, bones may also have fatty marrow.

And 1 tbsp (14 g) of this has 0.42 oz (12 g) of fat.⁴³

To help you get a grasp of that amount...

It's close to the fat content of a McDonald's Cheeseburger - 0.49 oz (14 g).⁴⁴

By the way, a cheeseburger is an example of unhealthy human food that a dog mustn't have.

It's greasy. Also, it may contain toxic ingredients for dogs, like onions.

Now, in terms of nutrition...

If you look at the table below, 0.42 oz (12 g) is near an adult dog's daily total fat needs - 0.49 oz (14 g).

Meanwhile, it's already more than 50% of a puppy's requirements - 0.74 oz (21 g).

Age (weight) of dog	Recommended total fat daily intake ⁴⁵
Puppies (12-33 lb or 5.44-14.97 kg)	0.74 oz (21 g)
Adults (>33 lb or >14.97 kg)	0.49 oz (14 g)
Pregnant dogs	1.02 oz (29 g)
Nursing dogs	2.36 oz (67 g)

Thus if your dog eats more than 1 tbsp (14 g) of bone marrow a day...

They can quickly meet or go beyond their daily fat needs.

And over time, this can trigger pancreatitis. Especially if your furry friend often gets other greasy human food too.

“What happens if a dog has pancreatitis?”

The enzymes in their pancreas start working before they reach the small intestine.

As a result, they digest the pancreas itself. Which then causes it to swell.

That's why dogs with this ailment will experience:

- Fever.
- Abdominal pain.

There's no exact known cause of this condition yet.

But fatty meals are usually linked to most of its cases in dogs.⁴⁶



Note: Eating a serving of bone marrow or a cheeseburger once may not make a healthy dog sick. But some furry pals with sensitive tummies can have an upset stomach due to so much fat.

Bacterial infection

Another risk is bacteria.

These may also contaminate bones. Especially raw ones.

The most common example of this is *Salmonella*.

It's a bacteria that affects the intestines. And dogs usually get these from eating raw food.


Which includes meat on raw bones.

So if your dog chewed on an infected one...

They may show signs, like:

- Fever.
- Weight loss.
- Increased heart rate.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Presence of mucus in poop.

Then after 4 to 6 weeks, your dog will shed the bacteria in their poop.

 **Warning:** Salmonella infection's '*zoonotic*.' Meaning, it can spread from dogs to humans. So, pick up your dog's poop asap using rubber gloves or a poop bag.

Either will do as long as your skin won't make any contact with the dung. Then, sanitize your hands and the whole place.

Now, you may wonder...

Which one's better for dogs: raw or cooked?

Boiled bones become brittle.

So your furry friend can easily break them into smaller pieces. And they may eat some of the fragments.

Thus, if, in any case, you need to give one to your dog, raw ones are safer.

Also, chewing these have some benefits in dogs, as doing it:

- Massages their gums.
- Exercises their jaw muscles.
- Scrapes off plaque in their teeth.
- Keeps them busy - making them less bored.

But despite these...

Giving bones to your dog still has more cons than pros.

Also, raw ones can be as dangerous as cooked bones. And this depends on what kind or size you'll give to your furry pal.

To know what to do and avoid when feeding your dog raw bones...

Consider the tips below:

9 things to keep in mind when giving raw bones to dogs

#1: Go for fresh lamb or goat bones

Whether raw or cooked, chicken and pork bones easily break.

So your dog can crack them in an instant and swallow the pieces.

Your dog's lucky if they only ingest teeny bits of chicken bones. As our furry pals' tummies could dissolve them well.

But still, it isn't worth taking the risk.

It's because if your dog swallowed a bigger one, it can cause:

- Choking.
- Clogging of the esophagus or intestines.
- Trauma in the mouth and organs - if the bone's sharp.

And these may also happen with ingesting pork bones.

"So, should I give my dog hard ones then?"

I mentioned earlier that objects that are too tough have the potential to hurt a dog's teeth instead.

It's rare.

But in those few cases, it's mostly observed in a cow's marrow bones.

Your dog might not be able to crack and eat them.

However, they may end up with a painful fractured tooth.

Hence, if you consider all of these...

The only safer options left are lamb and goat bones

They're harder than the bones of chickens and pigs.

But they're not too thick, like beef marrow bones that can chip a dog's teeth.



Note: Although lamb and goat bones are '*safer*' than others, they'll still pose a risk if they're cut in sizes your dog can swallow. So check out the next tip.

#2: Steer away from small/short bones

The ones you'll give to your dog must be longer than the length of their:

- Head.
- Muzzle.

This is so your dog can't swallow the whole bone. Then put themselves at risk of:

- Choking.
- Intestinal obstruction.

So if you'll give a raw lamb bone to your dog, never choose small lamb chops.

Pick only among larger parts, like:

- Ribs.

- Flaps.
- Tail bones.

#3: Offer raw bone to your dog after they've eaten

Your furry friend will likely chew on anything at full speed. So they can break the bone you served right away.


To prevent this, only give one to your dog after meals.

#4: Get the bone from your dog after 10 to 15 minutes

Although it's raw and big, your furry pal has strong jaws.

Thus, your dog may crack the bone or a part of it into smaller chunks after chewing for so long.

So, once 10 to 15 minutes have passed, pick up the bone away from your dog.

 **Warning:** Your dog might be happily playing with the bone. So don't snatch it from them abruptly. As you may get bitten (it's instinctual behavior).

Instead, distract your furry friend first.

Offer a dog-safe toy or treat that they love.

The latter must be something of '*high value*' or a snack your dog doesn't get often and loves very much.

#5: Also, some dogs may 'resource guard.'

It's when they become so protective of their things (e.g., food, toys).

So while doing this, watch your dog's behavior as you go near them.

And look out for signs of resource guarding below:

- Freezing.
- Snapping.
- Side-eye staring.
- Showing their teeth.
- Having pinned back ears.
- Wrapping the bone with their arms or body.

#6: Throw the bone afterward

For your dog's health, it's best to dispose of the raw bone after they chew on it.

But why's that?

It's because bacteria need moisture.

So with your dog's saliva, they can grow in numbers. Then contaminate your dog's bone.

Now you don't want your furry friend to be chewing on that next time.



Note: Most animal bones can be composted. However if they're not broken up into smaller parts, composting can take months to years. You can also put them in the trash or garbage. All the garbage must be in plastic bags.

#7: Don't let your dog bury their bone for later

Besides moisture, dirt from burying the bone may also help bacteria to grow in it.

Also, keeping it for so long can even make it more possible.

So you must get it from your dog asap. And never let your dog store it somewhere else.

#8: Never give bones to a dog with stomach issues

After chewing a raw bone, dogs with sensitive tummies might also get diarrhea.

It can be because it's a new item, and your dog isn't used to licking it. Or it's a marrow bone.

As I've said earlier, the marrow's rich in fat.

And fatty foods can irritate a dog's tummy.

That's why furry pals with loose stools are fed a diet with less than 20% fat.⁴⁷

#9: Never leave your dog with a raw bone alone

Although you did all the tips above...

You'll never know what'll happen.

So always supervise your dog as they play with a bone.

(This also applies to anything you give to your furry friend, such as toys.)

After some time, your dog may break the bone apart. Then eat it like an actual snack.

Thus, if this ever happens, you can stop your dog immediately.

To sum everything up:

Your dog may enjoy gnawing on a raw bone if it's:

- Fresh and clean.
- Given after meals.
- Not sharp on the edges.
- Taken away after 10-15 minutes.
- Thrown right away or once it's worn out.
- Larger than your dog's head and snout.
- Not too soft and brittle (e.g., poultry, pork).
- Not too thick and fatty like beef marrow bones.

Now, if you can't ensure the things above for your furry pal's safety...

Try other ways to entertain them. And to keep their teeth healthy.

Safer chew toys for bones

- [Bully sticks](#).
- [Classic KONG rubber dog toy](#).
- VOHC-approved dental chews.



Note: VOHC means the Veterinary Oral Health Council.⁴⁸ And they set the standards for pet dental products. So look for items with their seal if your dog needs to get rid of plaque or tartar.

But again, to prevent choking, never leave your dog alone with toys and chews.

#4: PICA



This is a condition where our furry pals eat non-food items.

And their usual targets are:

- Dirt.
- Nails.
- Poop.
- Coins.
- Rocks.
- Socks.
- Staples.
- Jewelry.
- Paper clips.
- Game pieces.
- Small children's toys.

Some even prefer these over edible meals.⁴⁹

And it's the 3rd most common issue in dogs based on a survey.⁵⁰

So it's not impossible for your furry friend to develop this.

The chances of getting pica are higher in:

- Puppies.
- Neutered/spayed dogs.

And they may swallow non-food items due to:

- Curiosity.
- Nutrient malabsorption.
- High thyroid hormone levels.
- Medications that increase their appetite.

But whichever the case is...

If your dog eats a toxic or sharp object, it can cost them their life.

So observe them and look for these other signs of pica:

- Dull coat.
- Diarrhea.
- Bad breath.
- Stomach pain.
- Broken or loose tooth due to chewing.

What to do?

For emergency

Option #1: If your dog retches and still breathes:

1. Let them spit out the object and wait for up to 2 minutes.
2. But if they can't, bring your dog to the animal hospital asap.
3. Monitor their breathing during the travel.



Note: For the next option, you need someone to help you. As they can hold your dog's mouth, so you can pull out the tongue and use a flashlight to look in their mouth and throat.

Option #2: If your dog has difficulty breathing:

1. Get a clean cloth or towel.
2. Open your dog's mouth using both hands - with one on their upper and lower jaw.
3. Tuck their lips over their teeth to avoid getting bitten.
4. With the cloth, grab and pull your dog's tongue outwards.
5. Ask someone to point a flashlight in your fur baby's mouth and throat.
6. Check if there are stuck objects inside.
7. If you see one and can pull it, gently drag it out.

Avoid pulling too fast to prevent further injuries. And be careful not to push it more inside their mouth.

Stop once you feel any resistance while removing the foreign body. Then try the next tips.



Warning: If you see nothing, never attempt to put your fingers down their throat. As you might damage the sensitive tissues there.

Option #3: Use the power of gravity

Try holding your dog upside down to let them cough up the object due to gravity.

For small breeds:

1. Grab their hind legs.
2. Pick your dog up.
3. Let their head hang downward.

For large dogs:

1. Hold their back legs.
2. Raise your fur baby's rear limbs like you're holding a wheelbarrow.
3. Let their front legs stay on the ground.



Note: Hold the position for a minute or two. But if nothing happens or if you can't lift your big dog, skip this option. Call and go to the vet immediately if they become unconscious.

However, if you can't get to the clinic asap or if you're waiting for someone to drive you, try the next method.

Option #4: Do the Heimlich maneuver

For small breeds:

1. Pick your dog up.
2. Bring them close to your chest - with their back on you.
3. Clench a fist.
4. Cover it with your other hand.
5. Look for the soft spot under your dog's rib cage.
6. Place your fist on the area.
7. Thrust inward and upward rapidly up to 5 times.

8. Lay them on their side after doing the Heimlich.
9. Do a '*mouth sweep*' or insert your index finger in their mouth to remove any debris.

For medium to large dogs:

If your dog is standing up:

1. Go behind your dog.
2. Stand or kneel - pick whichever gives you better access to their waist.
3. Do steps #3 to #9 above.

If your dog's lying down:

1. Put one of your hands on their abdomen.
2. Place the other one on your dog's back for support.
3. Press their abdomen upwards and inwards 5 times.

Option #5: Perform back blows

You can alternate this and the Heimlich maneuver as you wait.

1. Place the heel of your hand between your dog's shoulder blades.
2. Quickly thrust it down 2 times.



Note: Whether your dog coughed up the object or not, check their breathing after doing the back blows and the Heimlich:

1. Lay your dog down on their side.
2. Kneel behind them.
3. Align their head and neck to their body to open their airway.
4. Slightly raise their chin if necessary.
5. Place your hand on their chest.
6. See if it rises up and down.

7. Put your face or hand near your dog's mouth to ensure their breathing.


Now, as you're monitoring your dog's breath....

Check their pulse:

1. Place one hand on your dog's inner upper rear leg.
2. Position your thumb underneath.
3. Put the rest of your fingers over.
4. Check for a pulse.
5. Do this for about 10 to 15 minutes.

If the time's up and your dog has no heartbeat or signs of breathing, do the final option.

Option #6: Give your dog CPR

 **Warning:** Never do this on a conscious, healthy, breathing dog. Giving chest compressions may injure the ribs or lungs due to the pressure.

Perform the steps below as accurately and quickly as possible to save your furry pal:

1. Interlock your hands together.
2. Put them forward.
3. Place the heel of your hand on your dog's chest.

The chest's location varies on the breed or your fur baby's body type.

- *For medium-sized to large dogs:* it's the widest portion of their chest.
- *For narrow-chested breeds:* above the heart (where your dog's elbow points when you lift it on their chest).

But for the next ones, lay your fur baby on their back before performing CPR.

- *For small breeds:* place your thumb directly over the heart.
- *For wide, barrel-chested dogs:* put your hands on the breastbone or middle of their chest.

Once you've placed your hands on the right spot...

Perform rapid compressions:

1. Quickly thrust the heels of your hands downward 30 times.
2. For the beat, use the song, '*Staying Alive*' by Bee Gees as a reference.
3. Push your dog's chest on each "*ah.*"
4. Ensure you're pressing down enough by squeezing at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of your dog's chest width.




Note: For better blood circulation, allow your dogs chest to spring back every time you press it down.

Once done, do the next stage.

Give rescue breaths:

5. Hold your dog's snout and keep it closed.
6. Blow directly over their nostrils for 1 second twice.
7. Watch your furry pal's chest rise as you do this. (Avoid blowing too much than stated above.)

 **Note:** If your dog has no response, perform the cycle again (compressions and rescue breaths). Also, check your dog's pulse every 2 minutes until you reach the vet.

For precaution

If pica is caused by a health problem (e.g., nutritional deficiency):

- Serve a complete, well-balanced diet. (Refer to [#1: Wrong dog food](#))
- Break down your dog's meals into 3 to 4 smaller ones for easier digestion.
- Add *probiotics* or good bacteria to their food. Say, plain yogurt, kefir, or sauerkraut.

But if boredom's the root of pica...

Give your fur baby more exercise and mental stimulation.

You can do that by:

- Teaching your dog new tricks.
- Giving interactive dog puzzle toys.
- Replacing their food bowl with a dog treat dispenser.

Also, always tidy up your place.

Check and clean your tabletops, shelves, and cabinets reachable by your dog.

And ensure you don't leave anything they can swallow.

#5: HUMAN OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) PILLS



Is your medicine cabinet out of your dog's reach?

If not, you better keep your meds in a different place.

And make sure your furry friend can't access them.

Now, where am I going with this?

In 2021, the Animal Poison Control Center, or ASPCA got 401,550 calls from fur parents in the US.⁵¹

And 17% of them were due to cases of animals consuming human over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

Making it the top reason for poisoning in pets, especially dogs, for 4 years.

You can buy those medications without a doctor's prescription.

So most of our furry friends have access to them at home.

Ibuprofen, a popular painkiller, ranked 1st on the list by ASPCA^{.52}

Then *Acetaminophen*, usually known as *Tylenol*, was at #5.

Meanwhile, cold and flu medicines were at #6.

How do dogs get human medications?

First, some tablets and capsules have a sugar coating.

It covers up the pills' bitter taste.

Plus, it protects them from air or moisture.

But, it can also lure dogs.

And it's because most of our furry friends are curious and fans of sweet things.^{.53}

Thus, if your fur baby sees some of these medicines on the counter...


They might be tempted to taste them.

Then gobble up some pills.

Lastly, since the medications above are usually safe for humans...

Some dog parents may intentionally also give those intentionally to their fur babies when sick.

However...

 **Warning:** Most human medications are toxic to dogs. And I'll discuss the 3 common culprits below:

#1: Ibuprofen

This is mainly used to treat common conditions like:

- Mild fever.
- Headaches.
- Period pains.

So you might be more familiar with its brand names, such as:

- *Advil.*
- *Midol.*
- *Motrin.*

Now, a single tablet or 0.007 oz (200 mg) of Ibuprofen has no harmful effects on humans.

But it may already cause signs of poisoning in small dogs.

Also, if your fur baby has too much Ibuprofen, it can lead to:

- Liver failure.
- Kidney failure.
- Stomach ulcers.

Usually, a 45-57 mg/lb (100-125 mg/kg) dose of Ibuprofen may result in the following symptoms:⁵⁴

- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Stomachache.
- Loss of appetite.

So a puppy weighing 2.2 lb (2 kg) or less can experience these signs with a 0.007 oz (200 mg) tablet.

Further, at 77-136 mg/lb (175-300 mg/kg), your dog will be at risk of kidney failure.

Then, if they ingest 181 mg/lb (400 mg/kg) of this, they may show more severe signs, like:

- Coma.
- Seizures.
- Depression.

And worse, a 272 mg/lb (600 mg/kg) dose will be fatal to your furry pal.

#2: Acetaminophen

Like Ibuprofen, this drug also helps in easing pain.


But if your dog ingests at least 90.7 mg/lb (200 mg/kg) of it, they'll start showing signs of poisoning, like:⁵⁵

- Coma.
- Vomiting.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Low body temperature.

 **Note:** The normal body temperature in dogs ranges from 101-102.5°F (38.3-39.2°C).⁵⁶

Moreover, you'll also notice the following in your dog's appearance:

- Brownish gums.
- Swollen neck, face, and legs.
- Yellowish skin (a sign of a liver problem).

 **Warning:** These signs may appear 1-4 hours after ingestion. And if this condition's left untreated, it can lead to death.

#3: Cold and flu medicine

Most of these have '*pseudoephedrine*.'

It's a drug that clears stuffy noses. And usually, medicines that end with 'D' have the said chemical, like:⁵⁷

- *Claritin-D*.
- *Zyrtec-D*.
- *Mucinex-D*.

Now, a 1.36 mg/lb (3 mg/kg) dose of this can already make dogs suffer from:

- Panting.
- Hyperactivity.
- Nervousness.
- Increased heart rate.
- High blood pressure.
- Excessive dilation of the pupil.

But 4.5 mg/lb (10 mg/kg) of it can be lethal to a 20-lb (9-kg) dog.⁵⁸



Note: Some variants of *Advil* and *Tylenol* also have *pseudoephedrine*. Specifically, those made for colds and flu.

What to do?

For emergency

Step #1: Clear the area

If your dog ingests some pills:

1. Remove them from the room.
2. Put the medicine bottle or container away. Say in a high or locked cabinet.
3. Clean up the mess if there's any.
4. Ensure no pills are spilled on the floor or table that your dog can eat.

Step #2: Check your dog's condition and breathing

Next, observe your fur baby.

Are they sleepy, drooling, or vomiting?


List any changes in behavior that you notice.

And then...

Check your dog's breathing

1. Put your hand on their chest.
2. Count how many times they breathe within 30 seconds. (1 breath = each time their chest rises and drops).
3. Multiply the number of breaths by 2.

Then you'll get the total number of breaths per minute.

 **Note:** For reference, dogs have a normal breathing rate of 15-30 breaths per minute at rest.⁵⁹

Step #3: Contact an expert asap

Signs of poisoning may not appear right away.

They can show up a few hours or up to days after the ingestion.

But if you're sure your dog ate some pills, don't wait until they show signs of being sick. Especially if they swallowed a bunch of tablets.

Time's of the essence here. So call an expert asap to get some instructions.

First, contact your vet if they're available right now.

They know your dog best. Thus, they can give reliable treatment that suits your furry friend.

However, if your vet's away or the clinic's too far...

You may call either of these 2 emergency hotlines for pet poisoning:

- *Pet Poison Hotline:* (855) 764-7661.
- *ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC):* (888) 426-4435.



Note: These are available 24/7 all year round. They have experts that can help you with any pet poisoning cases. But there's a fee that'll be charged to your credit card after the consultation. Which is usually priced around \$75.

Also, to receive help, you'd have to inform tell them of important details about your dog first.

For example:

- Age.
- Breed.
- Weight.
- Last meal.
- Health history.

Besides these, take note of the name and estimated pieces of the medicine your dog ate.

Plus, the time they ingested it.




Note: Ensure you always have the numbers of your vet and these hotlines near you. You can write them on the memo pad by the phone, in your smartphone's notes, or on a calling card.

Step #4: Make your dog vomit (if instructed by an expert)

This is one way to flush the toxic drugs out of your dog's body.

But if not done correctly, this can do more harm to your furry pal.

As the process may irritate their throat or tummy.

 **Warning:** Never do this at home without instructions from the vet or any pet poison control.

Also, don't make your dog throw up if the ingestion happened over 2 hours ago from the medicine intake. And if your dog shows the following signs:

- Seizures.
- Gasping for air.
- Severe lethargy.
- Difficulty in swallowing.

Hazards of making a dog vomit:

- Swallowed sharp objects may injure their throat.
- *Aspiration pneumonia* or inhaling toxic gas or substances into the lungs.
- *Brachycephalic* or flat-faced breeds are more prone to aspiration pneumonia.

However, if the expert you called told you to do this before going to the clinic...

Prepare the things below:

- Oral syringe.
- 3% hydrogen peroxide solution.

"So, how do I make my dog vomit?"

Since your fur baby may throw up for 45 minutes...

Put them in a room you can easily clean.

Also, it must be a place where they feel comfortable.

Next, using the syringe, give 3% hydrogen peroxide solution to your furry friend.

Below are only references.

So follow your vet's dose:

- For dogs over 45 lb (20.4 kg): 3 tbsp (44 ml).
- For 45 lb and below: 1 tsp (4.9 ml) per 5 lb (2.27 kg).

And then, do the following steps:

1. Hold your dog's snout.
2. Gently pull back their lips on either side of their mouth to expose their teeth.
3. Insert the syringe and squirt the solution between their back teeth.
4. Wait for your dog to vomit within 15 minutes.
5. Stay by their side while they throw up.
6. Get a sample of their vomit. This will help the vet analyze the problem.
7. Clean the mess right away to prevent your dog from eating their vomit again.

Afterward, observe your dog.

Watch out for any reactions they may have, such as:

- Lethargy.
- Vomiting for over 45 minutes.

Lastly, call your vet or the pet poison hotline again for a follow-up.



Note: If your dog doesn't vomit after a few minutes, you can do this three times at most. Then perform it after every 15 minutes.

Step #5: Give activated charcoal (AC)

Ideally, your vet should provide this to your poisoned dog.

However, in urgent cases...

The vet or pet poison control may also tell you to give *activated charcoal*, a.k.a. AC at home.

It's a black powder that absorbs toxins in the system - like a magnet.

Then it exits the body with the poison via poop.⁶⁰

So doing this buys you more time if the clinic's too far from you. As it prevents your dog's body from absorbing more toxins.

The expert on the phone will instruct you on how to do it.

And the steps will vary based on the type of AC available at your home.

Or the form you're instructed to use (e.g., capsule, gel suspension).

But typically, it goes like this:

Take note of the dosage said by the expert

In general, activated charcoal is safe for dogs.

However, it'll only be effective if you give them the right amount for:

- Their weight.
- The kind and amount of toxin they ate.

And also, if you administer the suspension properly. *(We'll get to the detailed steps shortly.)*

Typically, the dose for dogs varies from 454-2,268 mg/lb (1,000-5,000 mg/kg).⁶¹

But in some cases, it can also be as low as 227 mg/lb (500 mg/kg).


You see, it's a large range.

So strictly follow the amount that the expert told you to keep your dog safe.

Then to get the total amount, multiply your dog's weight (in lb or kg - whichever's convenient for you) by the suitable dose.

For example, a 22-lb (10-kg dog) who's advised to have 454 mg/lb (1,000 mg/kg) of charcoal will need:

$454 \text{ mg} \times 22 \text{ lb} = (0.35 \text{ oz}) 9,988 \text{ mg}$ or 10,000 mg in total.

 **Warning:** Giving your dog a high dose of AC is dangerous. It can make their sodium blood levels rise. And this may lead to death if left untreated.

Get the activated charcoal

You may already have this in your dog's first aid kit.

But if not, buy some in a pharmacy near you.

Activated charcoal comes in:

- Tablets.

- Powder.
- Suspension.
- Gel tube (to be used with a gun applicator).

The last 2 options are easy to use at home since they're already mixed with water.

Also, it's perfect for dogs who refuse to eat solid food with activated charcoal.

But since they're liquids, ask your vet for the right dosage for your dog in fluid ounces (milliliters).



Note: Since dogs tend to eat things they shouldn't, you may want to have a stock of this at home just in case.

Assess your dog and give them the activated charcoal



Warning: Do this outside (e.g., garage) as things can get messy. And you may end up having black residues all over your carpet.

So, if your dog can eat at the moment:

1. Mix the activated charcoal with plain baby food or canned dog food. Or anything your dog loves to tempt them.
2. Offer your dog some food without AC if they won't eat at first.
3. Once they accept it, slowly give your dog the food with activated charcoal.
4. Do this until they finish the whole dosage.



Note: In this case, your vet may slightly increase the dose of AC. This is because mixing it with food lowers its ability to absorb toxins.

But if your dog can't eat:

Administer activated charcoal using a 100ml syringe.

Or use a gel suspension with a gun applicator (I included this on the list above).

1. Get how many AC tablets or serving your dog needs based on the recommended dosage.



Note: Check the product's label to know how much each capsule or serving weighs. Then divide the total dosage by it.

2. Mix the AC with water. Ensure it's not too thick so it can flow easily in the syringe.
3. Wear latex gloves before giving the activated charcoal to your dog.
4. Wrap your dog's neck and body with a clean towel.
5. Put more rugs around, as it'll get messy later.
6. Kneel or sit behind your dog.
7. Hold and gently lift their snout.
8. Insert the syringe into either side of their mouth.
9. Give them only a small amount of the suspension at a time.



Note: Do this to prevent your dog from vomiting and inhaling the excess fluids.

10. Let them swallow it before administering the next dose.

11. Always keep your dog's head in a level position during this. (Not too low, not too high.)
12. Repeat steps #5 and #6 until you complete the dosage.

The whole process can take a while. So this needs a lot of patience both from you and your dog.

Also, monitor your dog closely after giving them the suspension.

Then, update your vet or any expert you're talking to if the process went well or not.

And oh, expect your dog to have black-colored poop for a while as they ate charcoal.



Note: If instructed, you may have to administer charcoal again after 4-8 hours. Especially if your dog ate Ibuprofen or Vitamin D3. As there might be toxins left in the body that can return back to the liver.

And then...


Step #6: Bring your dog to the hospital

In any case, the last step's to take them to the nearest pet emergency.

Your dog may have released the toxins out of their body...

But, there could still be some side effects.

Also, if your furry pal's too weak to swallow, the vet there can give your dog activated charcoal via a stomach tube instead.

 **Note:** Don't forget to take samples of the drugs your dog ate. And their vomit too, if possible.

Now, let's move on to things you can do to prevent this from happening to your dog.

For precaution

Tip #1: Ensure your dog has no access to any medicines

Keep your containers, bags, or Ziplocs with medications out of your dog's reach.

Dogs can chow down many pills in an instant.


So never leave them:

- On open shelves.
- Inside a low drawer.
- On the table or kitchen counter.

Instead, put them at a higher level of your cabinet. Or in a locked storage box if possible.

This tip won't only ensure your dog's safety.

It can also keep curious small kids (if there are any) from getting into your medicine cabinet. And chew on some pills they shouldn't.

 **Note:** Be mindful of the labels too. You may need to store some medicines at room temperature. While you have to keep the others in the fridge (e.g., liquids, creams).

Tip #2: Never give your dog any human medications

If your dog's unwell, consult your vet first.

And no matter what, don't give your dog any human pills.

It's because what works for you will likely not work for your dog.

So our furry pals need a different dose than humans. And this will vary based on their weight.

That's why a single tablet may easily poison a small dog.

Now, to prevent this, some painkillers are specially made for dogs.⁶²


And vets usually give these to ease their pain due to:

- Surgery.
- Hip dysplasia.
- Osteoarthritis.

However, you need a vet's prescription to get them. Not like most human OTC painkillers.

Also, these meds for dogs can still cause an overdose if not given to them properly.

So, strictly follow the amount said by your vet.

 **Warning:** Painkillers might affect the liver or kidneys. So dogs who have problems with the said organs can't take these - even if the pills are made for animals.

#6: HUMAN-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES



These are different from over-the-counter, a.k.a OTC medicines.

It's because you need a doctor's prescription to get most of them.

Nevertheless, they still have the same effect on our furry pals.

In 2021, these placed 2nd in ASPCA's top toxins in dogs.⁶³

5 common harmful human-prescription meds for dogs

#1: Antidepressants

These medicines help boost your:

- Sleep.
- Mood.

- Appetite.
- Attention.

So vets may also give these to dogs with behavioral issues. Say aggression or anxiety.

But even with the right dose, some of our furry pals can show mild signs of poisoning.

And if they had too much of these, it can lead to severe problems, like:

- Seizures.
- Tremors.
- Inability to control their movements.

Alternate names:

- Paxil.
- Zoloft.
- Effexor.
- Prozac.
- Celexa.
- Serzone.
- Lexapro.
- Cymbalta.

#2: Thyroid hormones

If your body's not making enough of these, you can take a pill for it.

Also, vets give them to a dog if they have underactive thyroids.

But if your furry pal ingested a large amount of the medicines, they can show signs, like:

- Panting.

- Nervousness.
- Fast heart rate.
- Muscle tremors.
- Sudden aggression.

However, in this case, it's not enough to keep the pills out of your dog's reach.

It's because they can get poisoned by them indirectly.

With this, a story of a Golden Retriever came into my mind.

Based on a study, the dog ate another dog's poop regularly.

Then afterward, the Golden had thyroid poisoning.⁶⁴

That's because the pooping dog was taking thyroid hormones.

That's why the Golden got poisoned by eating their stools.

Alternate names:

- Soloxine.
- Synthroid.
- Levothyroxine.

#3: ADD/ADHD medications

These increase activity in the brain. As a result, they can make a person focus better.

So these meds are used for people with '*attention deficit disorder*' (ADD).

As well as '*attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*,' a.k.a. ADHD.

Now, these have the opposite effect on dogs.


The meds can cause your dog to be more hyper instead.

And even in small amounts, these may result in serious problems, like:

- Tremors.
- Seizures.
- Heart problems.
- Increased body temperature.

Alternate names:

- Ritalin.
- Methylin.
- Adderall.
- Concerta.
- Daytrana.

 **Note:** Signs start to show 15 minutes after the dog eats the medicine. These might last until 72 hours. And the symptoms can get worse if not treated asap.⁶⁵

#4: Sleeping aids

People take these to improve their quality of sleep. And also to reduce their anxiety.

But like the meds for ADD and ADHD, these have a contrary effect on dogs.

Instead of soothing them, these will only make our furry pals anxious.

Plus, they'll show some signs of poisoning below:⁶⁶

- Panting.

- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Drooling.
- Tremors.
- Aggression.
- Hyperactivity.
- Walking wobbly.
- Slow breathing rate.
- High body temperature.

Alternate names:

- Xanax.
- Sonata.
- Lunesta.
- Ambien.
- Klonopin.

#5: Heart medications

Lastly, these treat issues with the heart.

And they're grouped into 5 types:

- *Diuretics*: treat high blood pressure.
- *Beta-blockers*: slow down heartbeat.
- *ACE inhibitors*: lower blood pressure.
- *Cardiac glycosides*: boost heart contractions.
- *Calcium channel blockers*: lower blood pressure.

But if your dog swallowed too much of these, they can suffer from:

- Letahrgy.
- Diarrhea.
- Dizziness.
- Weakness.

- Low blood pressure.

Alternate names:

Diuretics:

- Bumex.
- Demadex.
- Aldactone.

ACE inhibitors:

- Captopril.
- Enalapril.
- Benazepril.

Beta-blockers:

- Atenolol.
- Betaxolol.
- Bisoprolol.

Cardiac glycosides:

- Digoxin.
- Digitoxin.

Calcium channel blockers:

- Isradipine.
- Felodipine.
- Amlodipine.

What to do?

The meds above are only the most frequently reported ones.

So to be safe, keep any human medicines from your dog.

Unless your vet gave one to them to treat their illness.

Also, always clean your place. And pick up any fallen pills on the floor to prevent your fur baby from eating them.

#7: TOXIC HUMAN FOOD



They say sharing is caring.

So since you love your dog a lot, you're willing to offer them a piece of whatever you're eating.

May it be a chocolate cake or a slice of pizza.

But wait a minute.

Just because what you're eating is safe for you doesn't mean it's the same for your furry pal.

Your dog might not digest some substances as effectively as you do. And this may upset their stomach. Or worse, poison them.

In 2020, human food ranked 3rd in the most common toxins in dogs.⁶⁷

And here are the top 5 culprits as per reports:

Toxic food #1: Chocolate

As I said, most dogs have a sweet tooth.

So your dog might be tempted to nibble at the chocolate bar you left on the counter. Or they may also beg while you're eating some.

But sadly, this treat isn't for our furry friends.

Every day, 76 dogs get poisoned by eating chocolates.

This number even gets higher during Christmas and Easter.⁶⁸

Thus, be wary of chocolate pieces that may fall during these seasons. As it's quite common.

What makes chocolates toxic to dogs?

These are made from cacao.

Its seeds contain the following:

- Caffeine - causes heightened alertness and energy.
- *Theobromine* - stimulates the heart and increases urine volume.

These 2 chemicals have some positive effects on humans.

In moderation, they increase blood flow in the brain. And eating chocolates also help boost one's mood.⁶⁹

Plus, they're used in opening blood vessels too. Hence, the chemicals keep the arteries and veins from narrowing.

Also, you easily digest those 2 substances.

And you can quickly get rid of them by peeing.

So normally, theobromine and caffeine only stay in your body for 2 to 3 hours.⁷⁰

On the other hand...

Your furry friend takes a while to absorb them.

As a result, the chemicals can circulate again in your dog's body. Even before they get rid of them by peeing.

Thus, they'll remain in your dog's system for up to 18 hours.

Then this may cause them to show signs of poisoning.

The symptoms can be mild or severe. And it depends on the amount and type of chocolate they ate.

Basically, the rule is:

The darker the chocolate, the more harmful it is to dogs

It's because unsweetened ones have higher theobromine content:⁷¹

Type of chocolate	Theobromine content
Dry cocoa powder	800 mg/oz (28.5 mg/g)
Unsweetened (baker's)	50 mg/oz (16 mg/g)
Semisweet and sweet dark	150-160 mg/oz (5.4-5.7 mg/g)
Milk chocolate	64 mg/oz (2.3 mg/g)

How much chocolate is dangerous for dogs?

Typically, eating 45-90 mg/lb (100-200 mg/kg) of it is harmful to your dog.

So, a 0.07 oz (2,000 mg) of chocolate may poison a 22-lb (10-kg) furry pal.

Meanwhile, 0.18 oz (5,000 mg) is toxic for a big dog weighing 55 lb (25 kg).



Note: 1 square of this confection weighs 0.15 oz (4,300 mg). So half a piece is enough to induce signs of poisoning in some dogs.

But, some of our furry friends can also be affected by eating only small amounts.

And this could be due to variations in:

- Type of chocolate used.
- Dogs' sensitivity to theobromine and caffeine.

So at the same amount, dark chocolate has a higher chance of poisoning your dog than milk.

Thus, here are other potentially dangerous lower doses of chocolates for dogs:

Amount of chocolate	Possible effects	Signs
9 mg/lb (20 mg/kg)	Mild signs	Vomiting. Diarrhea. Increased thirst.
18-22 mg/lb (40–50 mg/kg)	Heart problems	Nausea. Chest pain. Shortness of breath.

More than 27 mg/lb (60 mg/kg)	Seizures	
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So, never let your dog take a bite of your Hershey's bar or chocolate cake.

Eating a single crumb of such may not cause poisoning right away.

But a few more can.

Common signs of poisoning in dogs due to human food

- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Tremors.
- Drooling.
- Seizures.
- Collapse.
- Hyperactivity.
- Stomachache.
- Reduced appetite.
- Increased heart and breathing rate.



Note: Dogs can show signs of poisoning 2 hours after the ingestion. But since they absorb chocolates slowly, these may also appear within 6 to 24 hours. And most dogs recover from this after 3 days.

Toxic food #2: Grapes, raisins, and currants

These fruits and snacks might be tiny and look harmless.

But did you know they can cause kidney failure and death in some furry pals?

Grapes are toxic in all kinds. As the dogs poisoned in the reports ate different types, like:

- Seeded/seedless.
- Came from wineries.
- Organic/non-organic.
- Commercial/homegrown.
- All colors (green, red/purple).
- Dried (e.g., raisins, currants).

So, why are grapes harmful to dogs?

Aside from choking hazards, this fruit has a toxic substance in it.

And over the years, it's known to put our furry friends at risk of:

- Upset stomach.
- Acute kidney failure.

However, the toxic chemical in grapes has been a long mystery.

But recently, a group of vets had a new theory about it.

Before, experts suspected that the culprit might be *mycotoxin*.

It's a substance released by fungi or mold. And it can infect some grapes as they grow in vineyards.

Now, vets believe that the toxic chemical could be *tartaric acid*. A.k.a *'cream of tartar.'*⁷²

This substance has a sharp, tart taste.

It makes up 70%-90% of a grape's acidity.⁷³

And you can mostly find this acid in their pulp or flesh.⁷⁴

Thus, peeling the grapes won't make them less poisonous to dogs.

So, what makes experts think that tartaric acid might be the real culprit?

It's because the substance varies in grapes. And it's based on:

- Type.
- Ripeness.
- Vineyard soil.
- How they were planted or grown.

Now, this might explain why grapes have different effects on dogs.

For example, some dogs feel sick after eating only 4 pieces of grapes or raisins.

Meanwhile, other dogs don't have any issues with the same amount.

And it might be because every grape doesn't have the same level of tartaric acid.

Hence, the effects differ.

How many grapes/raisins are unsafe for dogs?

As I've mentioned earlier, dogs have different reactions to this fruit.

That's why there's no exact toxic amount yet.

But to give you an idea, below are some info I gathered:

- *Lowest reported dose:* 1.95 g/lb (4.3 g/kg).
- *Highest reported dose:* 8.9 g/lb (19.6 g/kg).

The first one was an 18 lb (8.2 kg) dog. And the dog died after eating 4-5 pieces of grapes.⁷⁵

So to be safe, never let your dog eat even a single piece of it. As well as:


- Raisins.
- Currants.
- Grape jam, jelly, or juice.

Other signs of grape poisoning you should look out for:

- Bad breath.
- Increased thirst and peeing.

In most cases, the earliest symptom's vomiting.

It usually appears within 2 hours of eating grapes. Then other symptoms (e.g., diarrhea) will show up 3-4 hours after.

 **Warning:** Some poisoned dogs may also pee less or not at all. This could be a sign of kidney failure. And its symptoms appear 1 or several days after, such as:

- Tremors.
- Depression.
- Abdominal pain.
- Not wanting to eat or drink.
- *Hypovolemia*. Or the sudden loss of over 15% of the body's fluid or blood supply.

Toxic food #3: Onions

These spices bring fantastic aroma and taste to our food.

Well, take pizzas and Chinese dishes as examples.

That's why some dogs may be drawn to their scent and have a few bites.

However, onions are toxic to our furry friends.

All of their components are harmful. And there's no difference either if it's raw or cooked.

So, what makes onions toxic to dogs?

They're from the family of vegetables called '*Allium*.'

And these crops have a toxic chemical named '*N-propyl disulfide*.'

It doesn't affect us humans.

But it's harmful to some animals like dogs.

Now, why's that?

The said chemical damages red blood cells, a.k.a RBCs, in your dog's body.

So over time, they'll decrease in number.

Then due to the low count of RBCs, your dog will develop *anemia*.

And since red blood cells carry oxygen to the parts of the body...

Their organs won't receive enough of it. Leading to the affected parts' failure or death.

The severity of the effects depends on how many onions your dog ate.

But vets observed that some dogs are more prone to get poisoned by these crops.⁷⁶

Among them are Japanese breeds. Such as Shiba Inus and Akitas.

And it might be due to hereditary high levels of these in their blood:⁷⁷

- Potassium.
- Erythrocyte reduced glutathione.

Moreover, dogs with existing ailments are at high risk too. Especially those with:

- Anemia.
- Diabetes.
- Liver problems.

How much onions can poison a dog?

Usually, a dose of 6.8-13.6 g/lb (15-30 g/kg) is unsafe for your furry pal.⁷⁸

A study shows that dogs eating 13.6 g/lb (30 g/kg) developed anemia over time.⁷⁹

So let's say a dog weighs 44 lb (20 kg).

They could suffer from poisoning if they eat more than 21 oz (600 g) of onions at once. Or if they ingest the same amount spread over several days.

This is equal to 5 small onion bulbs or 2 large ones.

Other signs of onion poisoning

- Pale gums.

- Red/brown-colored pee.

Toxic food #4: Garlic

This spice has many health benefits for humans.

Garlic helps boost the immune system. Plus, it can reduce bad cholesterol levels too.

But like its cousin - onion, it's also dangerous for dogs.

And when eaten at a high dose, garlic's 3 to 5 times more toxic.⁸⁰

Since the Allium family has the same toxic chemical...

Too much garlic may impair your dog's red blood cells too. Resulting in anemia.

How much garlic is bad for dogs?

It's the same with onions - 6.8-13.6 g/lb (15-30 g/kg).

But because garlic's smaller and its cloves only weigh 0.11-0.25 oz (3-7 g)...

Your dog would have to eat a lot of this before they suffer from poisoning.

For instance, a 66-lb (30-kg) dog has to ingest 32 oz (900 g) of garlic to show symptoms. And this is equal to 300 cloves.

So, a single garlic clove may not affect your dog at all.

However, don't be too quick to exhale a sigh of relief just yet.

Apart from fresh garlic, you should also be wary of garlic powder.

It's because 1/8 tsp (0.71 g) of this is already equivalent to 1 garlic clove.⁸¹

Since it's in powdered form, it's more potent or strong.

Now, this usually comes in packs weighing 3.53 oz (100g) to 35.27 oz (1kg).

So if your dog smells it, then open it by accident...

They can lick some of the powder.

And remember, it's concentrated.

Thus, it's easy for your dog to ingest a 100-pieces worth of fresh garlic cloves at once.

So, aside from fresh garlic cloves, store your garlic powder out of your dog's reach as well.

And never leave its sachet or bottle on the kitchen counter.



Note: Signs of garlic poisoning in dogs may appear within 24 hours.

Toxic food #5: Xylitol

Lastly, this is one of the most common dog toxins in every household.

But what's scarier is, unlike the things above...

You can't easily spot *xylitol*.

It's an artificial sweetener mixed in food and other products.

Thus, it's hidden in some items in your home, like:

- Gums.
- Candies.
- Toothpaste.
- Mouthwash.
- Deodorants.
- Sunscreens.
- Baked goods.
- Peanut butter.
- Instant coffee.
- Pancake syrups.
- Powdered drinks.
- Hair care products.
- Chewable vitamins.
- And the list goes on...



Note: Always check the label of the products you'll give to your dog. Some peanut butter may have xylitol in it. So stick with the healthiest options:

- Homemade.
- Peanut butter for dogs.
- Unsalted/unsweetened - organic peanuts should only be its ingredient.

So, if eating this artificial sweetener is safe for humans...

Why is xylitol toxic to dogs?

It has something to do with blood sugar.

In humans and dogs, *insulin* controls the *glucose* or sugar in the blood and cells.

The *pancreas* releases this hormone. And it helps the body's cells absorb sugar for energy.


Now, xylitol doesn't affect this process in humans.

But in your furry friend, it'll make their pancreas release more insulin than needed.

And when this happens...

Your dog's blood sugar will drop right away.

Then, it'll result in *hypoglycemia*. Or extremely low blood sugar.

 **Warning:** This can be fatal to dogs. So contact your vet asap. Then bring your dog to the nearest animal hospital.

So, how much xylitol is deadly for dogs?⁸²

Amount of xylitol consumed	Effects	Notes
>34-45 mg/lb (75-100 mg/kg)	Hypoglycemia	Signs may show up within 30 minutes after ingestion.
>227 mg/lb (500 mg/kg)	Liver damage or failure	Common cause of death in dogs.

To help you understand these doses, here's a reference:

Most chewing gums in the market have 0.007 oz (200 mg) of xylitol per piece.⁸³

Meanwhile, other brands may contain up to 0.035 oz (1000 mg).

Now, look at the table above.

Based on it, 0.03 oz (750 mg) of xylitol is enough to poison a tiny dog weighing 22 lb (10 kg).

If you use the reference, 0.03 oz (750 mg) is only 1-4 pieces of gum - depending on the xylitol content.

Mind you. Those candies are small and bite-sized.

Thus, any dog can easily swallow many chewing gums at once. And doing so can put them at risk of low blood sugar or liver failure.

So, keep those sweets away from your dog.

But aside from gums, it's also important for you to know the xylitol content of other common items at home:


Product	Xylitol content
Candies	0.017-0.049 oz (500-1,400 mg) per piece
Toothpaste	0.001-0.004 oz (30-125 mg) per pea-sized amount
Mouthwash	0.026 oz (750 mg) per serving or 4 tsp (20 ml)
Instant coffee	0.21 oz (6,000 mg) per 2 tsp (7.97 g)
Pancake syrup	0.16 oz (4,500 mg) per 3 tsp (20 g)
Chewable vitamins	0.035 oz (1,000 mg) per 6 tsp (37 g)
Sugar-free chocolates	0.11-0.18 oz (3,000-5,000 mg) per piece
Hot chocolate with xylitol	0.35 oz (10,000 mg) per 2 tsp (7.97 g)

Sweetened peanut butter	0.035 oz (1,000 mg) per 6 tsp (37 g)
Xylitol-sweetened plum jam	0.42 oz (12,000 mg) per 1 tsp (6.14 g)

Also, besides the common signs listed above...

There are other symptoms of xylitol poisoning in dogs. And you'll notice these in their muscles:

- Pain.
- Loss of mass.
- Lack of control and coordination.

 **Note:** Dogs absorb xylitol fast. So signs can show up as early as 30 minutes after a dog ingested it. But in some cases, these may also appear within 12 hours.

Other human food that can be dangerous for dogs

Food name	Dangerous parts/dose per body weight	Effect/s
Salt	>1,814 mg/lb (4,000 mg/kg) ⁸⁴	Salt poisoning
Avocado	Skin, leaves, seeds, fruit ⁸⁵	Upset stomach, swollen pancreas (for sensitive dogs)
Mustard	Seeds with toxins	Inflamed stomach or intestines
Alcoholic beverages	Ethanol - 2.49-3.58 g/lb (5.5 to 7.9 g/kg) ⁸⁶	Drowsiness, body cells damage, heart

		attack
Yeast dough	Raw yeast produces ethanol	Bloat, alcohol poisoning
Nuts	Toxic: Macadamia nuts The rest are safer but pose choking hazards.	Obesity, upset stomach, swollen pancreas, clogged intestines, tremors

What to do if your dog ate something toxic?

The steps are similar to [#5: human over-the-counter \(OTC\) medicines](#).

1. Take the harmful food away from your dog instantly.
2. Clean any crumbs or spills in the area that your dog might lick.
3. Wipe their mouth with a damp cloth.
4. Identify what your dog ate.
5. Get some samples and estimate how much they've ingested.
6. Call your vet for advice.
7. If your vet's unavailable, contact either of these hotlines to get the right instructions for your situation:
 - *Pet Poison Hotline*: (855) 764-7661.
 - *ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC)*: (888) 426-4435.
8. Take your dog to the clinic. Don't forget to bring a sample of the food your dog ate.

#8: HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS



We're done with food, medicines, and plants that are toxic for your dog.

But wait...

The list of dangers inside your home doesn't end yet.

It goes without saying that what you must not put in your mouth shouldn't be reached by your dog either.

I'm talking about household chemicals here.

For 3 years, these make up 15.5% of a pet poison center's phone calls.

And 12.5% of them are cases of dogs.⁸⁷

Based on it, the 2 most common culprits are the following:

- Cleaners - 27.2%
- Automotive products - 22.8%

For you, it's clear that these things aren't fit for eating.

And they shouldn't be inhaled as well.

However, dogs aren't aware of these dangers. Especially small curious puppies.

Thus, they may come near a chemical spill on the floor and touch it.

Or eat a soap bar if the bathroom door's open.

Well. You already know that household products are toxic for humans and animals.

But let me discuss each of them and their common effects on your furry pal.

As well as the things you need to be mindful of for their safety.

#1: Cleaning products

Most of these chemicals have a strong smell.

So it usually discourages people from coming near them.

Now, you may think your dog will do the same. And ignore a bucket filled with diluted bleach.

Some furry friends might do that.

But other dogs will try to investigate the mystery liquid and then lick some of it.

Or, it could also be that your cleaner's packaging catches your dog's attention.

As a result, your dog might open or tear off the product.

Then ingest the toxic material inside it.

When this happens...

You'd want to know what to do first and what to expect.

To help you with this, here are the 6 common harmful chemicals in cleaning products:

Bleach

This solution has 2 types:

- Chlorine bleach.
- Oxygen bleach (also known as '*color-safe*').

The 2nd one has *hydrogen peroxide*.

It's effective in removing stains and whitening surfaces.

But it's gentler and has fewer health risks than the 1st one.

Meanwhile, chlorine bleach has *sodium hypochlorite*.

It's a stronger chemical than the previous one. And it kills:

- Fungi.

- Viruses.
- Bacteria.

So you'll find this type of bleach in most disinfectants.

But how a dog will react to it depends on the amount of sodium hypochlorite it has.

Household vs concentrated bleach

You can see the former in most cleaning products.

Usually, its sodium hypochlorite content's only around 5%.

So if you're cleaning using diluted household bleach and your dog licked some of it...

They may suffer from less serious signs. As mixing it with water makes it even less toxic.⁸⁸

And they might experience these symptoms:

- Drooling.
- Vomiting.
- Skin redness.
- Mild stomach problems.

In this case, your vet may tell you to give your dog some milk.

Doing it can help counteract the bleach they drank.

Also, the signs above typically fade after 30 to 45 minutes.

But despite this good news, still, call your vet. Then monitor your dog from time to time.


If you notice redness in their mouth, take them to the clinic at once.

On the other hand...

Concentrated bleach has 8.25% sodium hypochlorite.

Thus, it causes more harm to dogs.

Exposure to it often results in chemical burns. So this calls for immediate medical attention.

 **Warning:** Never mix bleach with other chemicals. If you add ammonia to it, it'll produce *chloramine*. It's a gas that can irritate the eyes, nose, and airway.

Another dangerous combo is chlorine bleach and acid.

If you mix those chemicals, it'll release *chlorine gas*.

Short exposure to it can cause a burning sensation in the eyes or throat.

But exposure for a longer time might lead to:

- Chest pain.
- Breathing issues.
- Fluids in the lungs.

So these solutions are harmful to anyone who inhales it, not only to your dog.

Phenol

In 2016, this is the 2nd most common chemical in US households.⁸⁹

It's a colorless substance with a sweet scent. But it also prevents bacteria from growing.


Thus, you'll often find *phenol* in:

- Disinfectants.
- Mouthwashes.
- Spray cleaners.
- Carbolic soaps.
- Sore throat sprays.

It has a lot of medical and hygienic purposes.

But like the other chemicals...

High doses of phenol can also cause burns in dogs and humans. Especially if it's inhaled or consumed.

 **Warning:** Phenol evaporates slower than water.⁹⁰ So mops or towels soaked in it must be kept away from dogs even though you used them hours ago. Wash them well, and don't forget to wear rubber gloves before doing that.

Ammonia

Like bleach, this is a frequently-used ingredient in household products.

Because it can dissolve grease, it's used in cleaning:

- Tubs.
- Tiles.
- Sinks.
- Ovens.
- Drains.

- Toilet bowls.
- Countertops.
- Glass/windows.

Ammonia has a strong fishy odor. And when its gas form dissolves in water...

It'll result in *ammonium hydroxide*.

It's a dangerous substance that your dog can inhale, touch, or eat.

This mixture can irritate your dog's skin. Then it may result in burns if your dog is exposed to it for a long time.

Isopropyl alcohol

You may also know this as *rubbing alcohol*.

Due to its ability to kill germs, it's used in:

- Wet wipes.
- Detergents.
- Glass/window cleaners.
- Multi-surface/purpose cleaners.

Besides these, you'll also find this chemical in other products in your house, like:

- Antifreeze.
- Nail polish remover.
- Colognes/perfumes.
- Alcohol-based flea sprays.

“How do dogs usually get poisoned by this?”

Your furry friend may lick a product with *isopropyl*. Or they might step on it by accident.

But poisoning is also possible if you spray a flea control on your dog with this substance.

The skin can absorb *isopropyl alcohol*. And the process often happens so fast.

So it may go in their:

- Colon.
- Stomach.
- Intestines.

One more thing.

Compared to *ethanol* or *methanol*...

Isopropyl alcohol's 2 times more toxic.

So dogs may already experience poisoning by ingesting ≥ 0.23 ml/lb (0.5 ml/kg) of it.⁹¹

Using the data, a 55-lb (25-kg) dog might show signs after consuming 0.43 oz (12.5 ml).

And its common effects are the following:

- Damaged organ tissues.
- Slowed down brain activity.

These will then cause dogs to display the signs below:

- Tremors.

- Vomiting.
- Collapse.
- Weakness.
- Disorientation.
- Lack of coordination.
- Increased urination and thirst.

Now, if the poisoned dog isn't treated asap, it may also result in:

- Coma.
- Seizures.
- Slow heart rate.
- Shallow breathing.
- Abnormally low blood pressure and body temperature.

And eventually, these can lead to death due to organ failure.⁹²

Hydrogen peroxide

Do you remember this from the tip on how to make your dog vomit?

Usually, the solution used for that has a 3% concentration.

It's considered safe for your furry friend.


But only if you follow the correct dose given by a vet or a toxicologist from a pet poison center.

Thus, any products with higher than 3% hydrogen peroxide content are dangerous to dogs.

So if your dog was exposed to those, they may suffer from:

- Vomiting.
- Eye damage.

- Skin irritation.
- Trauma to the stomach lining.

 **Warning:** Never give hydrogen peroxide to your dog without instructions from your vet. For more info, see '[Step #4: Make your dog vomit.](#)'

Glycol ethers

Similar to ammonia, these substances also have many uses.

Usually, you'll see these in liquid soaps and cleaning products for:

- Glass.
- Ovens.
- Carpets.
- Flooring.

But *glycol ethers* can also be in:

- Paints.
- Cosmetics.

"What do glycol ethers do to dogs?"


If the cleaner with these ingredients isn't mixed with water...

2-3 ml/lb (4.4–6.6 ml/kg) of it is enough to cost a dog's life.⁹³

For example, a 44-lb (20-kg) dog needs to ingest 2.98-4.46 oz (88-132 ml) of the solution to suffer severe signs of poisoning.

And the symptoms may differ based on the time of ingestion:

Time of consumption	Symptoms
Within 30 minutes to 12 hours	Vomiting. Depression. Excessive thirst. Increased urination. Poor muscle control. Lack of awareness of their body in space.
Within 36 to 72 hours	Lethargy. Diarrhea. Dehydration. Stomach pain. Swollen kidneys. Loss of appetite. Irregular heart beat. Wounds in the mouth or gums.

 **Note:** In this case, bring your dog to the clinic asap. There's an antidote for this called *fomepizole*. And it works best until 8-12 hours after ingestion.⁹⁴

As a summary...

Here are the common signs of cleaning products in dogs based on how they're exposed to them:

Type of exposure	Effects on dogs
Ocular (eyes) exposure	Redness. Blurry vision. Eye discharge.
Skin/fur contact	Burns. Blisters. Skin redness. Bleached/damaged fur.

Inhalation	Tremors. Gagging. Retching. Coughing. Sneezing. Sore throat. Breathing issues. Shortness of breath. Burning sensation in the nose, throat, and airways.
Ingestion	Vomiting. Seizures. Disorientation. Stomach pain. Lack of coordination. Burning sensation inside the body.

#2: Fresheners

You use these to get rid of foul smells in a room or a surface (e.g., carpet).

And they come in many forms, such as:

- Oils.
- Gels.
- Plug-ins.
- Candles.
- Aerosols.
- Potpourri.

However, if sprayed or used...

They emit *volatile organic compounds*, a.k.a. VOCs.

These are chemicals that turn into gasses in the air.

And they're also responsible for the scent of many products at home, like:

- Paints.
- Cleansers.
- Pesticides.
- Repellents.
- Wood preservatives.
- Copiers and printers.
- Glues and adhesives.

That's why in most US households, VOC levels are higher indoors than outdoors.⁹⁵

How dangerous are VOCs to dogs?

Once inhaled or exposed to products with these chemicals, they may cause:⁹⁶

- Nausea.
- Headaches.
- Irritated eye, nose, or throat.
- Damage to organs (e.g., kidney, liver, brain).


Take note, VOCs are harmful both to you and your furry friend.

And the signs you'll experience will vary based on the way and how long you're exposed to them.

Common symptoms

- Fatigue.
- Vomiting.
- Dizziness.
- Nosebleed.
- Skin irritation.
- Shortness of breath.

- Redness or swelling of the eye/s.

 **Note:** The signs will be different if your dog ingested these in solid form (e.g., plug-in air fresheners, powder) If eaten, they may result in an upset stomach in dogs. And cause signs such as vomiting and watery poop.

#3: Laundry products

Since these are necessary for every house, many dogs have access to these items.

Laundry detergents

These can be in the form of the following:

- Pods.
- Liquid.
- Tablets.
- Powder.

Luckily, licking or sniffing a tiny amount of detergent (liquid or powder) isn't lethal to dogs. Especially if they did it only once.

In this case, they may suffer from mild signs of an upset stomach. Say vomiting and diarrhea.

But the parts exposed to detergents might also be irritated or have a burning sensation.

However, it'll be a different case if your dog ate a detergent pod or tablet.

These are tiny in size. But since they're compacted...

They're more concentrated with detergent.

So detergent pods are 1.8 times likelier to cause signs in dogs.⁹⁷


Also, since they're small, your dog can easily consume a large amount of toxins at once.

Now, for bigger doses of detergents, your dog may show more severe signs, such as:

- Gagging.
- Retching.
- Drooling.
- Lethargy.
- Coughing.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Vomiting (can be foamy).

Apart from these, they can also have chemical burns if they ingested a large dose of these.

Type of detergent exposure	What to do?
Skin exposure	Wash the area with running water for at least 30 minutes. Or do it until the slippery feeling's gone.
Eye exposure	Rinse the affected eye/s with saline (water with salt) for around 20 minutes.
Ingestion	Call a vet or pet poison control center - especially if your dog ingested a detergent pod or tablet.

 **Warning:** Never make your dog vomit at home if an expert didn't instruct it. It's because the biggest concern for detergent poisoning is *aspiration*.⁹⁸

It happens when something gets into your lungs or airway accidentally.

Since you'll give your dog a solution, the chances of aspiration are high if it's not done properly.

Then it may even lead to *pneumonitis*.

It's the swelling of the lungs. And this condition is life-threatening to dogs.

So contact an expert right away in this situation.

Fabric softener

You may have this in liquid or sheet form.

Unlike some laundry detergents, these can be more dangerous to dogs.

It's because fabric softeners often have *cationic* detergents.

These are more toxic. And they cause ulcers in a dog's throat or esophagus.

If your dog ingested a liquid softener, they may experience the same signs with liquid detergents.

But another possible effect's irritation to their:

- Skin.
- Airway.
- Stomach lining.

However, if your dog ate a fabric softener sheet, they're at risk of 2 things.

One, the material may cause a blockage in your dog's intestines.

This needs to be removed through surgery. And it can lead to death if not treated immediately.

Two, the sheets also have similar chemicals to liquid softeners. And ingesting them may cause irritation or burns in your dog's tummy or throat.

Plus, some of these might even result in:

- Lung damage.
- Kidney disease.
- Nervous system depression.

#4: Home repair items

Lead

Paints made of this material have been banned in the US since 1978.⁹⁹

And it's because lead's toxic by nature.

But you can find this in old houses built before that year.

It's not only a hazard for dogs but also for humans.

Old paint may flake and turn into dust over time. Which can then be inhaled by you and your dog.

Or they might ingest some of this as they groom or lick themselves.

Isocyanates

You'll find these in:

- Tile adhesives.
- Polyurethane glues.
- Spray foam insulation.

What makes these dangerous?

Once eaten, these materials can expand inside your dog's tummy.

Studies show that adhesives like Gorilla Glue become 3-4 times bigger than their normal size.¹⁰⁰

If it happens, it can result in a large foreign body. Then it'll block your dog's tummy.

And the only way to get rid of it is surgery.

Glycol ethers

- Paints.
- Resins.
- Lacquers.
- Varnishes.

Other household hazards:

- Swimming pool chemicals.
- Automotive products (e.g., antifreeze, brake fluids).

What to do?

For emergency

The first aid will differ depending on what type of injury your dog has.

But in every case, you have to seek help from your vet afterward.

For eye irritation

1. Wear rubber gloves.
2. Hold your dog's snout with one hand.
3. Gently lift their eyelid using your other hand's palm.
4. Wash the affected eye with cool running water for 10 minutes.
5. Read the product's label to check if there are treatment suggestions.
6. Put a clean bandage on their eye to protect it from further damage.



Note: If you see a discharge, rinse it with an eyewash for dogs instead. Or use a cold tea mixed with lots of water.

For chemical burns on the skin

1. Inspect their fur to check for chemical burns.
2. Rinse the affected area with cool water or *saline solution* (water with salt).
3. Contact your vet and bring your dog to them right away.



Note: If the clinic's too far, ask your vet what to do while you're traveling. They might instruct you to trim your dog's fur around the burned area. Put *silver sulfadiazine cream* on it. And wrap the burn with clean gauze.

For inhalation

1. Quickly remove your dog away from the toxic product
2. Put them in a separate room that's well-ventilated.
3. If your dog has seizures, ensure they're far from hazards (e.g., stairs, sharp objects, furniture).
4. Check their breathing.
5. Count how many times they inhaled and exhaled within 1 minute.
6. Hold your dog's snout and keep it closed.

7. Blow into their nostrils to give them air every 2-3 seconds.
8. While you're doing rescue breaths, place one of your hands inside on your dog's rear limb (middle part).
9. In case of no pulse, perform CPR on your furry friend.
10. Rinse their eyes with running water as they may have also been irritated by the toxin.
11. Call and go to the emergency hospital.



Note: For more details on how to monitor your dog's breathing and perform CPR, look at the steps in '[#5: Human over-the-counter \(OTC\) pills.](#)'

For ingestion of toxic household products

1. Wear rubber gloves.
2. Remove the toxic chemical away from your dog.
3. Secure your dog in a well-ventilated room.
4. Call your vet. Or the pet poison control center if the former's not available at the moment.
5. Collect some of your dog's vomit if they throw up.
6. If not, never attempt to make them vomit without the permission of your vet or pet poison expert.
7. Bring your dog to the vet or emergency hospital.

For consumption of corrosive substances

These refer to chemicals that destroy anything they touch, like:

- Bleach.
- Ammonia.
- Detergents.
- Sodium fluoride (in toothpaste).
- Zinc chloride (in mouthwashes).
- Benzalkonium chloride (in floor cleaners).

Because of that property, it's not advised to give your dog a home remedy or something to drink.

This is because the chemical they ingested might react to it and cause more damage.

Also, don't induce vomiting if not instructed by your dog.

If this is the situation you're in, follow the steps below:

1. Wash your dog's mouth with lukewarm water using a spray hose or shower head.
2. Do this for up to 20 minutes at most.
3. Avoid putting the hose at the back of their mouth. (This is to prevent their lungs from getting filled with water.)



Note: Bring your dog to the clinic asap if they're unconscious.

For precaution

#1: Confine your dog in another room

While cleaning, put your dog in a separate area.

Never allow them to roam freely in the same room you're in. As they may get near the toxic products.

After letting the chemicals set in:

- Rinse the area well with water.
- Don't let your dog inside yet until it's dry.
- Wear rubber gloves before you clean.
- Wash your hands before handling your dog.

Do this, too, if you're repairing any part of your house.

Then throw any materials you used before letting your furry friend in the room.

Once you're done, keep the windows open and place a fan inside the room to blow off the remaining foul scent.



Note: Securing your dog in a crate can also keep them away from toxins. As well as installing a baby gate.

But your furry pal's nose or airway might still be irritated if they inhale a harmful gas (e.g., ammonia, phenol). So confining them in a different room would be the best.

#2: Store all household products away from your dog

- Keep them in a high place or locked cupboard.
- Ensure the storage cabinet's closed all the time.
- Transfer cleaning products that easily spill in a container with a lid.
- Put a lock in low drawers to prevent dogs and children from opening them.

Also, read your household products' packaging. And store them accordingly.

Some items may release gas. So you must ventilate the room.

#3: Wipe chemical spills right away

Most dogs love licking any surface.

So your dog may not hesitate to lick a puddle of bleach. Or taste some of the spilled detergents on the floor.

Thus, to prevent this, ensure your dog won't find anything toxic lying on the ground.

If you spill a chemical, put your dog in another room. And clean it up immediately.

Also, never leave the towels or tissues you used and...

#4: Dump used household items in a secured bin

You did your best to keep any toxic products away from your dog.

But dogs can also make a mess in your trash.

And find something they shouldn't put in their mouths.

That's why it's also important to secure your bins. As you have to throw away empty bottles or bags of household products.

For this, a dog-proof bin can help lessen your worries.

This could be a trash can with a:

- Heavy lid.
- Foot pedal.
- Sturdy material (e.g., stainless steel).

#5: Switch to dog-safe cleaning alternatives

These are affordable.

Plus, you can find most of the materials you need inside your house.

Also, you don't have to worry about poisoning in small amounts.

Common natural alternatives to artificial cleaners:

White distilled vinegar

Unlike most store-bought products...

This won't harm your dog even if they lick or inhale some of it.

Plus, it's colorless so it doesn't stain surfaces.

However, since it has an acid, it may damage delicate fabrics if not mixed with water.

White vinegar's 5-10% *acetic acid*. And it's enough to remove grease and kill bacteria.¹⁰¹

Thus, it's used as an all-purpose cleaner.

"Is white vinegar completely safe for my dog?"

A healthy dog won't be affected by ingesting 1-2 tsp (4.93-9.86 ml) diluted vinegar.¹⁰²

But it can be risky for dogs with existing conditions due to its acid content. Especially those with a kidney ailment.

However, if you use this as a cleaning agent...

Your furry friend won't likely ingest an amount more than this.

Moreover, its acid evaporates faster than water.

So this alternative is still considered safe. Unless your dog drinks white vinegar straight from the bottle.



Note: The strong scent of vinegar may also deter some dogs. So open the windows in the room you cleaned to get rid of the odor faster. But normally, its smell fades once it's dry.

To use this, follow the instructions below:

For various surfaces:

1. Mix 1 part white vinegar with 1 part water.
2. Transfer the solution to a spray bottle.
3. Shake to blend the ingredients.

For toilet bowls:

1. Drizzle 2-3 cups of undiluted white vinegar on the insides of the toilet bowl.
2. Scrub the bowl using a toilet brush cleaner.
3. Flush the toilet to rinse the vinegar.
4. Wipe any spills in the bathroom.

For glass/windows:

1. Prepare a spray bottle.
2. Mix 2 parts white vinegar with 1 part water.
3. Spray the mixture on the glass.
4. Wipe it with a clean microfiber cloth.

For removing carpet odor:


1. Spray a small amount of white vinegar.
2. Allow it to evaporate in the air.

For faucet/shower head:

1. Add 1 tsp (6 g) of salt to 2 tsp (9.86 ml) of white vinegar.
2. Don't mix it well to preserve the grains of salt.
3. Pour the solution on the fixture.
4. Scrub it with a brush to get rid of grimes and deposits.

If the fixture's resistant to acids, you may also:

1. Combine equal parts of white vinegar and water.
2. Put the solution in a plastic bag.
3. Soak the faucet/shower head in it.
4. Tie the bag to the fixture with a rubber band.
5. Let it sit for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
6. Untie the bag and remove it.
7. Turn on the fixture's water supply to flush out any residues.
8. Wash it with water.
9. Allow it to dry.

 **Warning:** Since vinegar has an acid, it may damage natural stone and hardwood floors.

Apple cider vinegar (ACV)

Compared to the previous one, this has a sweeter scent.

But still, it can help wipe out bacteria.¹⁰³

However, it can't fully replace disinfectants in killing viruses.

Same with white vinegar, it's also effective in cleaning many surfaces.

You only have to combine 1 part of this with 1 part of water. Put it in a spray bottle and sprinkle a thin layer on the area you want to clean.

Baking soda

As its name implies, this is mostly used in baking to make the dough rise.

But it's also helpful in cleaning and removing unwanted odors.

Speaking of scents, it's popular in getting rid of dog smells too.

So you may have read about this remedy on a website before.

Now, why does this work?

Your dog's pee has acid. While baking soda's a base.

When you mix them together, the latter neutralizes the acid in your furry pal's pee.

As a result, the foul odor it causes was removed or lessened.

For removing carpet odors:

1. Drizzle some baking soda on the carpet.
2. Allow it to sit for at least 20 minutes.
3. Vacuum the surface to get rid of any remnants.
4. Throw the vacuum bag right away to prevent the spreading of parasites in it (e.g., mites, fleas).

For washing your dog's bedding:

1. Add 1 cup (250 g) of baking soda to a mild laundry detergent.
2. Put the bedding in the dryer for around 15 minutes.
3. Let it dry.

"Is baking soda completely safe for my dog?"

It doesn't have toxic chemicals. So your dog can ingest a small amount of it and be unharmed.

But, anything that's too much is bad.

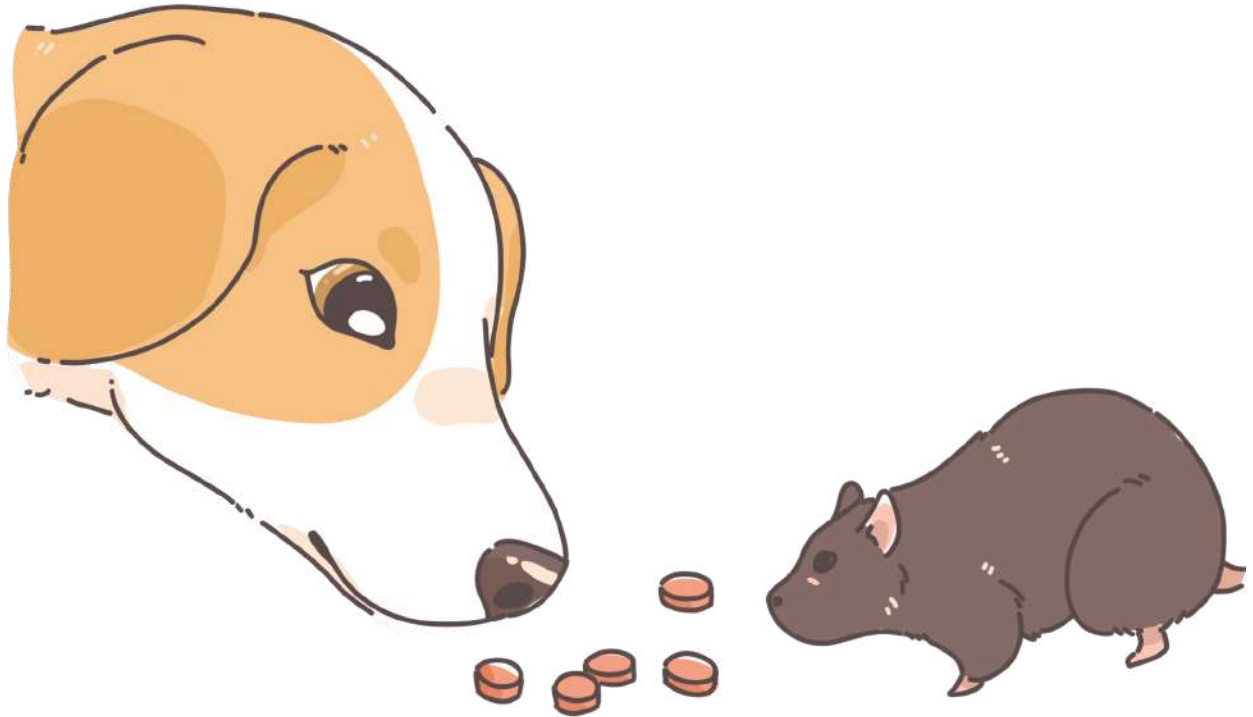
Thus, while you're cleaning, never leave the bag or box of baking soda open.

Keep it out of your dog's reach. Or better put your furry friend in a different area while you're busy cleaning.

Other things to keep in mind:

- Talk with your vet before using baking soda around your dog for allergies.
- Do a spot test first on your carpet or furniture to see if it's affected by baking soda.

#9: RAT POISONS



Next to calming chews...

Rodenticides take the 8th spot in the most common dog toxins.

These baits aren't only for rats and mice. But they're also for other rodents like:

- Beavers.
- Squirrels.
- Woodchucks.

Thus, they're made to attract animals.

And your dog's no exception to this.

To lure rodents, rat poisons have an inviting scent and taste.

So they may include flavorings, such as:

- Vanilla.
- Fish oil.
- Caramel.
- Molasses.
- Chocolate.
- Peanut butter.
- Shrimp paste.

That's why if your dog smelled a piece of rat poison lying in your house or garage...

They might mistake it for a yummy snack.

Then your furry friend won't hesitate to sniff and eat it.

What are the effects of rat poisons on dogs?

They're as toxic to our furry friends as they are to rodents.

In small doses, some dogs may experience mild symptoms. Say lethargy or vomiting.

But because they're highly toxic, severe symptoms are also possible, such as:

- Bleeding.
- Seizures.
- Organ failure.

And sometimes, these might even lead to death.

Now, the seriousness of the signs will depend on the:

- Amount of rat poison your dog ate.
- Type of toxic ingredient in the rodenticide.

Rodenticides' 4 most common active ingredients

#1: Anticoagulant

When eaten, this ingredient stops a dog's blood from clotting.

As a result, they may have internal bleeding if they injure their organs or blood vessels.

Back then, this was the most commonly used substance in rat poisons.

But since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a.k.a. EPA, banned some of their kinds¹⁰⁴...

You may not often see products with this ingredient.

However, some brands are still registered to use it, such as:

- Talon.
- Havoc.
- Rodex.
- JT Eaton.
- Final Strike.

And the *anticoagulants* they use are grouped into 2 types:

Type of anticoagulant	How it works	Examples
1st generation	Kills rodents after several	<i>Warfarin.</i>

	feedings	<i>Diphacinone.</i> <i>Chlorpophacinone.</i>
2nd generation	Finishes off rodents with only a single dose	<i>Difethialone.</i> <i>Difenacoum.</i> <i>Brodifacoum.</i> <i>Bromadiolone.</i>

Of the 2 kinds, the 2nd generation's more toxic.

It's 2.5-200 times stronger than the 1st generation.¹⁰⁵


So, a dog only needs to eat 1 bait with this type of drug to show signs of poisoning.

Now, due to the 2nd generation's risk to children and other animals...

The EPA only allows it for rat poisons used in:

- Commercial pest control.
- Structural pest control markets.

That's why they're not readily available to consumers.

 **Note:** Luckily, there's an antidote available for this active ingredient. To prevent further bleeding, vets give vitamin K1 to dogs who ate rat bait for 30 days.¹⁰⁶ It's given either orally or via injection. And then, tests will be done to check if their blood clotting's normal.

#2: Cholecalciferol (Vitamin D3)

Due to the ban of some anticoagulants...

The famous rat poison brand, *d-CON*, switched to this type.

And it often comes in:

- Pellets.
- Soft baits.
- Hard blocks.

Once a dog eats rat bait with this drug, they'll have high calcium levels in the blood.

When it happens, the excess calcium gathers and hardens in their:

- Kidneys.
- Blood vessels.
- Stomach lining.

Then, this may result in fatal conditions, like:

- Kidney damage.
- Multiple organ failure.

Now, you might wonder,

"What makes vitamin D3 toxic to dogs?"

This nutrient's safe for your furry friend at low levels.

But at high doses, it can become toxic.

It's because vitamin D3's fat-soluble. Meaning, it only dissolves in oils and fats.¹⁰⁷

So if your dog ingests too much of this, they won't be able to get rid of the excess by peeing.

Instead, their body will store the nutrient in the liver and fat tissues.

After this, vitamin D3 can make your dog's body absorb calcium fast.

Then it'll result in high calcium levels in the blood.

What's the lethal dose of Cholecalciferol in dogs?

Half of the reported deaths were at 39.92 mg/lb (88 mg/kg).¹⁰⁸

But some dogs also died at a lower amount, 0.0009 mg/lb (0.002 mg/kg).

So if you consider both doses, it'll look like this per dog's body weight:

Dog's weight	Average recorded lethal dose (39.92 mg/lb or 88 mg/kg)	Lowest reported lethal dose (0.0009 mg/lb or 0.002 mg/kg)
11 lb (5 kg)	0.016 oz (440 mg)	0.00000035 oz (0.01 mg)
22 lb (10 kg)	0.031 oz (880 mg)	0.0000007 oz (0.02 mg)
44 lb (20 kg)	0.062 oz (1,760 mg)	0.0000014 oz (0.04 mg)
66 lb (30 kg)	0.093 oz (2,640 mg)	0.0000021 oz (0.06 mg)
88 lb (40 kg)	0.124 oz (3,520 mg)	0.0000028 oz (0.08 mg)
110 lb (50 kg)	0.155 oz (4,400 mg)	0.0000035 oz (0.10 mg)
132 lb (60 kg)	0.186 oz (5,280 mg)	0.0000042 oz (0.12 mg)
154 lb (70 kg)	0.217 oz (6,160 mg)	0.0000049 oz (0.14 mg)
176 lb (80 kg)	0.248 oz (7,040 mg)	0.0000056 oz (0.16 mg)

As you may notice, the heavier your dog is, the higher the lethal dose.

So again, younger and smaller breeds are at greater risk than bigger dogs. As the former can be poisoned with only a little amount of rat bait.

“How much vitamin D3 rodenticide is lethal to dogs?”

Usually, a pack of soft bait or bait blocks has 0.0003-0.0007 oz (10.5-21 mg) of vitamin D3.¹⁰⁹

Now, the lowest possible dose is only 0.0000021 oz (0.06 mg).

So, your dog may already suffer from poisoning by eating 1 bait.

But if you use the average lethal dose, 0.093 oz (2,640 mg)...

A 66-lb (30-kg) dog must ingest 125 soft bait at most for the poison to be deadly.

Meanwhile, smaller breeds need a lesser amount than this to suffer from serious signs.

#3: Bromethalin

Like the 2nd generation of anticoagulants...

This ingredient can also kill rodents with only 1 dose.


So it's lethal to your furry friend, even in small portions.

“What does it do?”

When consumed, *bromethalin* causes a dog's brain to swell.

Then this may lead to:

- Seizures.
- Paralysis.
- Lack of movement control.

 **Warning:** Some cases resulted in death. These happened 10 hours after eating rat poison with bromethalin.¹¹⁰

“How toxic is this ingredient to dogs?”

1.08-2.13 mg/lb (2.38-4.7 mg/kg) dose of bromethalin can be enough to end a furry pal's life.¹¹¹

Dog's weight	Lower lethal dose of bromethalin	Higher lethal dose of bromethalin
	1.08 mg/lb (2.38 mg/kg)	2.13 mg/lb (4.7 mg/kg)
11 lb (5 kg)	0.0004 oz (11.9 mg)	0.0008 oz (23.5 mg)
22 lb (10 kg)	0.0008 oz (23.8 mg)	0.0017 oz (47 mg)
44 lb (20 kg)	0.0016 oz (47.6 mg)	0.0033 oz (94 mg)
66 lb (30 kg)	0.0025 oz (71.4 mg)	0.0050 oz (141 mg)
88 lb (40 kg)	0.0034 oz (95.2 mg)	0.0066 oz (188 mg)
110 lb (50 kg)	0.0042 oz (119 mg)	0.0083 oz (235 mg)
132 lb (60 kg)	0.0050 oz (142.8 mg)	0.0099 oz (282 mg)
154 lb (70 kg)	0.0059 oz (166.6 mg)	0.0116 oz (329 mg)
176 lb (80 kg)	0.0067 oz (190.4 mg)	0.0133 oz (376 mg)

This active ingredient are in the following products:

- Tomcat.
- TALPIRID.
- FASTRAC.

#4: Zinc and aluminum phosphide

You can also see this last active ingredient in mole baits.

But it's often used in rat poisons too.

So, how harmful is *phosphide* to your furry friend?

If it mixes with the acid in your dog's stomach...

It'll produce a dangerous gas called *phosphine*.

It destroys any surface on contact.

Thus, it may damage your dog's body tissues once released.

When this happens, your dog may vomit right away. And your furry pal might do it with or without blood.



Note: Phosphine gas smells like garlic or decaying fish.

“What’s the lethal dose of zinc and aluminum phosphide on dogs?”


9-18 mg/lb (20-40 mg/kg) of this may already cause death in your dog.¹¹²

Dog's weight	Lower lethal dose of zinc and aluminum phosphides	Higher lethal dose of zinc and aluminum phosphides
	9 mg/lb (20 mg/kg)	18 mg/lb (40 mg/kg)
11 lb (5 kg)	0.0035 oz (100 mg)	0.007 oz (200 mg)
22 lb (10 kg)	0.007 oz (200 mg)	0.014 oz (400 mg)
44 lb (20 kg)	0.014 oz (400 mg)	0.028 oz (800 mg)

66 lb (30 kg)	0.021 oz (600 mg)	0.042 oz (1,200 mg)
88 lb (40 kg)	0.028 oz (800 mg)	0.056 oz (1,600 mg)
110 lb (50 kg)	0.035 oz (1,000 mg)	0.071 oz (2,000 mg)
132 lb (60 kg)	0.042 oz (1,200 mg)	0.085 oz (2,400 mg)
154 lb (70 kg)	0.049 oz (1,400 mg)	0.099 oz (2,800 mg)
176 lb (80 kg)	0.056 oz (1,600 mg)	0.11 oz (3,200 mg)

You'll see this ingredient in the following brands:

- Ratol.
- Arrex.
- Ridall.
- Pollux.
- Phosvin.
- Zinc-Tox.
- Gopha-Rid.
- ZP MOUSE.
- Rodenticide AG.
- Denkarin Grains.

 **Warning:** Phosphine is also harmful to humans when inhaled. So open your vehicle's windows as you bring your dog to the clinic. Do this to provide airflow inside. And also to prevent you from breathing in the gas.

One more thing:

These 4 ingredients are harmful not only when eaten or inhaled.

Because some of them may also irritate a dog's eyes or skin:¹¹³

Eyes (From low to highly irritating)	Skin (From slight to mild irritating)
<i>Bromadiolone</i>	<i>Diphacinone</i>
<i>Bromethalin</i>	<i>Bromadiolone</i>
<i>Zinc phosphide</i>	<i>Brodifacoum</i>
<i>Difethialone</i>	
<i>Brodifacoum</i>	
<i>Diphacinone</i>	
<i>Strychnine</i>	

How to know if your dog ate rat poison?

The common signs vary per active ingredient.

So observe your dog closely. And watch out for the following:


#1: Anticoagulant rat poisons

- Lethargy.
- Collapse.
- Pale gums.
- Reduced appetite.
- Difficulty breathing.

Besides these, some dogs may also show less common signs, such as:


- Bruising.
- Seizures.
- Swollen joints.
- Bleeding nose/gums.

- Loose poop with blood.

 **Note:** Typically, you might see these signs on a dog after 3-5 days.


#2: Cholecalciferol rodenticides

- Depression.
- Muscle weakness.
- Black-colored poop.
- Decreased heart rate.
- Increased thirst and peeing.
- Vomiting (with or without blood).

 **Note:** Symptoms may appear 12-48 after ingestion of the rat bait.

#3: Bromethalin rodenticides

- Tremors.
- Seizures.
- Paralysis.
- Loss of coordination.
- Being extremely excitable.


 **Note:** Mild tremors and lack of coordination may be gone after weeks or months. But if your dog had a large dose, these signs might not appear until 5 days.

#4: Rat poisons with zinc and aluminum phosphides

- Bloating.
- Lethargy.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.

- Weakness.rat posions
- Stomach pain.
- Breathing problems.
- Uncoordinated movement.

You might see these a few minutes after ingestion. But you may also notice them within 24 hours.

 **Warning:** Never give food to your dog if they ate rat poison with phosphides. Eating causes more acid in the stomach. Which will then increase the level of phosphine gas in their body.

In general, signs of poisoning can show up 1-7 days after your dog ingests rat bait.

So, knowing if your dog's poisoned or not will be quite tricky. Especially if you didn't catch them in the act.

But here's a tip that might help you.

Rodenticides come in different colors.

They have bright dyes like green, red, blue, etc.

So if you suspect your dog of eating rat poison, inspect their mouth for any colorings. As well as their poop.

And see if you notice any colored foreign materials in their dung.

What to do?

The survival rate of dogs after eating rat poison with anticoagulants is 98.7%.¹¹⁴

However, the chances might be lower if they consumed the other 3 active ingredients:

- Bromethalin.
- Cholecalciferol.
- Zinc/aluminum phosphide.

But still, this shows that you can save your dog's life from poisoning.

So continue reading to know how.

For emergency:

Step #1: Secure your dog and call your vet

Rat poisons are highly toxic.

Also, dogs may absorb some toxins faster than others.

So if you see your furry friend eating rat bait or suspect them of having one:

1. Remove any rat poison left in the area while wearing latex gloves.
2. Place your dog in a different room. Ensure it doesn't have any harmful toxins, food, or objects your dog may consume.
3. Get the packaging of the rodenticide that your dog ate.



Note: Search the product's info on the Internet if you already threw its box away.

4. Collect some of your dog's vomit (if there's any). Carry this with you to the clinic or hospital.
5. Contact your vet for advice.

During the call, be ready to answer some questions about the:

- Body weight of your dog.
- Product's weight per piece or pack.
- Rat poison's brand and manufacturer.
- Amount of rat bait left or you originally placed.
- Time when your dog ate a rodenticide. Or the day when they first showed signs of poisoning.

Depending on the amount and rat poison's active ingredient...

Your vet will tell you what to do first.

And then, they'll likely ask you to go to the clinic asap.

But if you can't reach it within 1-2 hours or your vet's unavailable...

Step #2: Rush your dog to the nearest pet emergency,

But before doing so, prepare the following:

- Take a picture of the rat bait's packaging.
- Or carry the actual product's box with you.

This is to help the vet know the active ingredient in the rat poison. So they can treat your dog accordingly.



Note: Usually, dogs stay in the hospital for 2-6 days. This can be less or more depending on the seriousness of their condition.

Step #3: Call the pet poison control center

Lastly, do this if your vet's out. Or if traveling to the hospital will take you more than 2 hours.

There are 2 hotlines you can contact:

- *Pet Poison Hotline: (855) 764-7661.*
- *ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC): (888) 426-4435.*

The experts on the phone can tell you what to do in the meantime. As long as you provide them details about your dog and the rat poison.

So, prepare to answer the same questions above.



Note: If you're unsure about the active ingredient, look for the 'EPA registration number.' It's on the rat poison's label. And it can help pet poison control to identify the main toxic chemical.

Once they're done with the computations...

They may give you instructions on how to flush out some of the toxins in your dog.

For example, by making your dog vomit. Or by giving them activated charcoal (AC).

But despite this, still go to the clinic or hospital afterward for a checkup.



Warning: Only do these methods if you receive instructions from an expert. As they may do more harm to their throat or tummy if not done right.

However, if you're told by a vet to make your dog throw up or give them AC...

Do it outdoors.

But first, put your dog in a place that's:

- Easy to clean up.
- Open and has plenty of air.
- Equipped with windows as ventilation.
- Close to a faucet with a hose or other water source.


Next, check out the info and detailed steps on [#5: Human over-the-counter \(OTC\) pills](#).

Then, do the following once your dog throws up outside:


1. Make sure they don't eat their vomit again.
2. Put your dog away from the area right away.
3. Don't lower your head to avoid inhaling any harmful gas.
4. Spray water on the vomit using a hose. (Ensure it's diluted enough to not draw other animals' attention.)
5. Wash the vomit away into a drainage or storm sewer.

But if your dog vomits indoors after eating rat bait with phosphide...


1. Open all openings in the area (e.g., windows, doors).

 **Note:** Phosphide releases a deadly gas. It's dangerous to humans and animals. So do this to avoid anyone from inhaling it.

2. Go out and bring your dog to another space if possible.
3. Make sure no other pets or people stay in the room where your dog vomited.
4. Get an electric fan and ran it at floor level.

 **Note:** Usually, gas sinks near the floor as it's denser than air. So, blowing the fan in that position may help you get rid of the phosphine gas in the room.

5. Call 911 or contact your local fire station.


 **Note:** Experts there may help you determine whether the air in your area's already safe or not. So in the meantime, don't go to the said room unless it's been checked.

6. Talk to your vet or reach the pet poison control hotline for instructions.

7. Rush your dog to the nearest animal hospital.

Also, look out for the effects of phosphine gas on humans:

- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Chest pain.
- Headaches.
- Stomachache.
- Difficulty breathing.

 **Note:** If you or other people at home experience any of these seek medical attention at once.

For prevention:

Tip #1: Keep rodenticides out of your dog's reach

As I said before, rat poisons have flavorings that attract animals.

And you know how good your dog's nose is.

So store the baits in a cool, dry place that your dog or children can't reach.

Tip #2: Switch to a pet-friendlier rodent control

Even if you place the rat poison in the attic or an area your dog can't access...

Some rats may move the bait elsewhere. Or they can also take it to their nests.

And this might make the poison accessible to your dog.

Also, other dogs or pets can still chew through a rat bait station when curious.

So, if you don't want to worry about these risks...

Use rat traps instead.

“What are its pros?”

When you set up a trap correctly and put it in a place where your dog can't access:

- Your dog, other pets, and children won't be at risk of poisoning.
- You'll avoid foul-smelling carcasses behind walls or areas you can't reach.

“Which rat trap should I use?”

There are many types to choose from. But I only included the 3 best options:


Type of rat trap	How it works
Snap trap	Makes use of a spring-loaded bar to kill rodents
Electronic trap	Rapidly eliminates rodents via electric shock

CO ₂ -powered trap	Has a carbon-dioxide-powered piston that strikes rodents at once
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Some modern rat traps may also come with a safety box. And this keeps children or other pets away from the device.

Also, even though they're a '*safer*' alternative to rat poisons...

- Ensure to read the trap's instructions carefully before using it.
- Always place them in spaces that aren't accessible to dogs and children.


 **Note:** Avoid live and glue traps. These often cause rodents to pee due to fright. Since their urine can be a source of diseases, you might put your dog at risk.

Tip #3: Be alert when walking your dog outside

You may have switched to rat traps and never leave rodenticides inside your house...

But some of your neighbors might still be using rat baits.

So keep an eye out for those and other hazards (e.g., bones, poisonous toads) during walks.

 **Note:** Before letting your dog play in your yard, check your fence for any gaps. Your dog might detect rat bait in your neighbor. And they may access it through those holes.

#10: INSECTICIDES



Got a problem with bugs in your yard?

It's a common problem in most households.

But as a dog parent...

You have to take extra caution for your furry friend before you make action.

Insecticides have always been among the top 10 toxins in pets.

For 3 years, pesticides made up 71.1% of poisoning cases in dogs.¹¹⁵

And 40.8% of them were due to insecticides.

The rest of the culprits are as follows:

Type of pesticide	Percentage of received calls
Rodenticide	27.6%
Herbicide	14.2%
Molluscicide	11.5%
Fungicide	5.9%

"How do dogs ingest insecticides?"

Most flea and tick medications have these chemicals.

So once applied, your furry friend may lick them by accident.

Or, they could also:

- Walk on a treated lawn.
- Eat a poisoned bug or plant.
- Consume an opened insecticide container.

"What happens if my dog was exposed to bug spray?"

Its effects depend on the:

- Kind.
- Amount.
- Type of exposure (skin contact or ingestion).

Usually, licking a small amount won't cause severe issues in dogs.

But it'll change if your dog ingests large doses.

One research found that insecticides increase the risk of bladder cancer in dogs.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, based on another study¹¹⁷...

Chemicals that stop the growth of bugs are also linked to *canine malignant lymphoma*, a.k.a. CML.

It's a cancer of the '*lymphatic system*.' Or a group of vessels and organs that help fight infections.

“How many types of insecticides are there?”

There are around 20 classes of them.

But the 3 most commonly used ones are¹¹⁸:

- *Pyrethroid*.
- *Carbamate*.
- *Organophosphate*.

The 2nd and 3rd types block an enzyme in the body called '*acetylcholinesterase*.'¹¹⁹

When this happens...

The *neurons* or message-carrying cells in the brain become too worked up.

So a dog may suffer from:

- Tremors.
- Paralysis.

Or worse, death.

Moreover, signs of pyrethroids can be as mild as:

- Drooling.
- Vomiting.
- Excitability.
- Depression.
- Lack of coordination.

But high doses are also deadly.¹²⁰

And they might cause:

- Seizures.
- Severe tremors.



Note: Signs may appear minutes after exposure. Sometimes, it takes an hour or more.

What to do?

For emergency:

1. Wash the area that had contact with cool water and mild soap.
2. Find out the name and amount of insecticide ingested.
3. Never make your dog vomit unless it's an instruction from an expert.
4. Call your vet or the pet poison control center:
 - Pet Poison Hotline: (855) 764-7661.
 - ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC): (888) 426-4435.

For precaution:

- Always clean up poisoned bugs.
- Place insecticides in high storage.
- Strictly follow the label's directions.
- Keep your dog away from newly-treated areas.

- Put the products in a bigger, sealed container in case of leaks.
- Remove your dog and their stuff in the room before spraying chemicals.
- Store them in their original packaging (for instructions and numbers to call).

“How long do insecticides stay on the surface?”

It'll vary per:

- Product.
- Environment.
- Amount applied.

Experts measure this by '*half-life*.'

It's how long a substance's value lowers to 50%.

And in insecticides, the factors that help reduce this are:

- Wind.
- Water.
- Sunlight.
- Low humidity.
- High temperature.

But for reference...

Here's a list of products and their half-life based on a study:¹²¹

Product	Half-life
Orthene™	1-15 days
Guthion™	3-5 days

Sevin™	14 days
Lorsban™	10-14 days
Diazinon	2-14 days

So, it's best to keep your dog away from treated areas for at least 3 days.

Then ensure the part has been rinsed by water or rain.

“How to choose a safe flea medication?”

Ask your vet to know the product that suits your dog.

As there are a few things to consider when picking, such as your furry pal's:

- Age.
- Breed.
- Lifestyle.
- Coat type.
- Health history.
- Presence of other pets/children.

But here are some popular treatments with vets:¹²²

Brand	Type of medication	Notes
Advantage Multi™	Topical	Prevent your dog from licking the treated area for at least 30 minutes.
Frontline Plus™		
Trifexis™	Oral	
Bravecto™		Only for adult dogs and puppies 6 months old and above weighing at least 4.4 lb (2 kg). ¹²³

Seresto™	Flea collar	Some dogs might be allergic to this. Keep this out of kids' and other pets' reach.
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Note: You need your vet's prescription for most of these meds. Except for the Frontline Plus as it's an over-the-counter, a.k.a OTC, product.

“Are there dog-safe insecticides?”

There's no 100% safe solution for your dog.

But, there are less harmful ones¹²⁴, like:

EPA-registered biopesticides¹²⁵

These are materials you can find in nature.

For instance:

- Plants.
- Animals.
- Bacteria.
- Minerals.

They have fewer risks than regular insecticides.

Plus, these break down fast.

Some examples of these are:

- Canola oil.
- Baking soda.

Meanwhile, EPA stands for '*Environmental Protection Agency*.'¹²⁶

Its goal's to protect the health of:

- Humans.
- The environment.

As well as the animals that live with us.

So, if you're looking for a safer insecticide option...

You can check out these EPA-registered products:¹²⁷

- Vegol™.
- Azera™.
- Des-X™.
- Enstar™.
- Dazitol™.
- Azatrol™.
- PyGanic™.
- Stirrup-M™.
- Avachem™.
- Agroneem™.
- AzaGuard™.
- Sil-MATRIX™.
- SucraShield™.

Products with an 'EPA Safer Choice Label'

These are backed up by research.

And the companies behind them ensure they meet EPA's standards.

So you can consider these safe for:

- You.
- The environment.
- Your pets and other people.

If you're wondering about the logo, here's what it looks like:

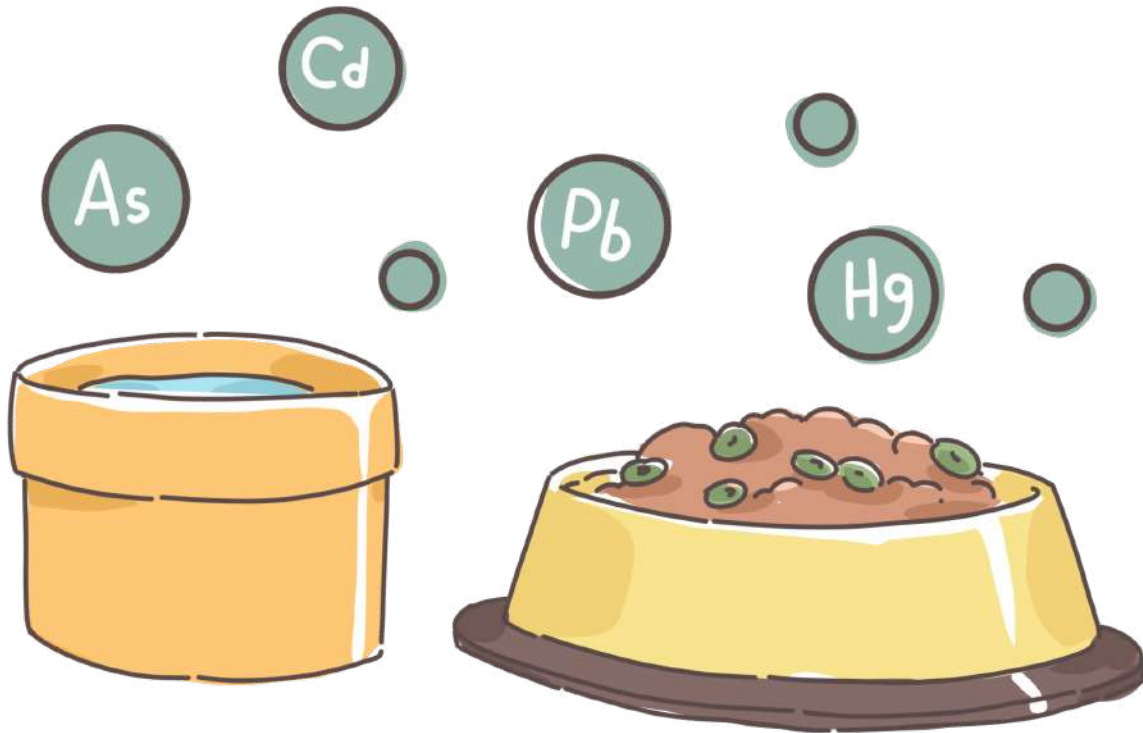


epa.gov/saferchoice



Note: Consult this with your vet first. Also, although a product's labeled safer than others, still use it with caution. And keep your dog away from treated areas for the time being.

#11: HEAVY METALS



No matter how keen you are.

There are some things that our naked eyes can't see.

One example of these is heavy metals.

Which can endanger your dog if inhaled or consumed.

“What are those?”

These are metals heavier than water.

You can naturally find them in nature.

But they could accumulate. Then cause poisoning in humans and dogs.

“What are the common toxic metals?”

The usual culprits are:

- Lead.
- Arsenic.
- Mercury.
- Cadmium.
- Chromium.

Even in low amounts, these metals can result in organ damage.

Plus, the US EPA says they're human '*carcinogens*.' Or substances that likely cause cancer.¹²⁸

And one can get these after exposure to contaminated:

- Air.
- Food.
- Water.

As well as materials used in coins and house construction.

“How do dogs get these?”

Among the things listed above...

Food is the most common way for dogs to get these toxic metals.

So this urged researchers to analyze the matter.

A study checked the levels of heavy metals in dog and cat food.¹²⁹

Also, experts reviewed if they surpassed the '*maximum tolerable level*,' a.k.a. MTL.

And the results?

The heavy metals below exceeded the MTL in dog food:

- Lead - 80.55%.
- Mercury - 100%.
- Vanadium - 75%.
- Uranium - 95.83%.
- Aluminum - 31.9%.

Plus, kibbles had higher levels of metals than wet food.

And here are the possible reasons for this:

- Contaminated soil and bodies of water.
- Animals used in production ate polluted crops.

In connection with this...

Several studies found high levels of metals in dogs':

- Hair.¹³⁰
- Bone tissues.¹³¹
- Livers and kidneys.¹³²

Also, this kind of poisoning's common in young dogs.

As they're still in the exploring stage and tend to put anything in their mouths.

"What are the risks for dogs?"

The effects will depend on the type of metal.


But usually, most of them cause stomach issues.

And it'll show through these signs:

- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Constipation.
- Stomach pain.
- Loss of appetite.

Metal	What it does to dogs	Other symptoms	Common sources
Lead ¹³³	Replaces calcium. Affects bone formation. Hinders kidney function. Deters memory and learning.	Lethargy. Blindness. Extreme anxiety. Spitting up of food.	Solder. Lead foil. Car batteries. Linoleum tiles. Plumbing materials. Water from lead pipes. Lead paint (from old buildings).
Arsenic ¹³⁴	Affects the blood vessels. Causes organs to swell and bleed.	Blood in poop. Unusual exhaustion. Cold skin in the ears and legs.	Herbicides. Insecticides. Heartworm drugs. Wood preservatives.
Mercury ¹³⁵	Results in brain, kidney, and stomach issues.	Shock. Sore mouth. Shortness of breath.	Fish (e.g., tuna). Broken mercury thermometer.
Cadmium	Affects males' reproductive function. ¹³⁶ Only poisons dogs	Seizures. Swelling of the nose.	Batteries. Cooking utensils. Plastic pigments. Solder in water

	in high dosages. ¹³⁷		pipes. Contaminated food and drinks.
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 **Warning:** If left untreated, most of these metals can cause death. Especially if your dog's exposed to them for a long period.

What to do?

For emergency

1. When caught in action, move your dog to a safer room - away from the poison.
2. Bring them to the vet or nearest pet hospital asap.
3. Never induce vomiting if not instructed.

If the metal's ingested...

Your vet will clear it from your dog's system.

And they may need surgery if there are foreign bodies inside.

But if your furry pal had contact with a mercury spill...

Here's what you need to do:

Step #1:

1. Put your dog in another room immediately.
2. Keep other pets or children away too.
3. Turn off the air-conditioner in the area with the spill.
4. Open all windows and keep the doors closed.
5. Use a fan to help blow the air outside.

Step #2:

6. Wear latex gloves.
7. Remove any worn accessories.
8. Wash your dog's feet and fur using a shampoo with '*selenium sulfide*.'
9. Dry them with a clean old towel.
10. Put the cloth you used in a sealed container.
11. Move your dog to a crate or safer area.
12. Monitor them for symptoms.

Step #3:¹³⁸

13. Put on a new pair of gloves.
14. Secure pieces of glass on a paper towel.
15. Use a dropper or cardboard to pick up beads of mercury.
16. Wrap both of these in paper towels and put them in a separate sealed bag.
17. Sprinkle sulfur powder on the mercury spill.
18. Use a paper towel to clean up the substance.
19. Repeat #10 until you see no visible traces.
20. Rub a dampened towel on the surface.
21. Turn on a flashlight to check if there are shiny beads left.
22. Put all the materials you used in another sealed plastic.
23. Call your local authority on how to safely dispose of your trash.
24. Don't stay in the room for at least 24-48 hours.



Note: Never touch the mercury or use a vacuum/mop to clean it. Also, the tips above are only for small spills. If more than 2 tbsp (29.5 ml) are on the floor, contact the *National Response Center*, a.k.a. NRC: 1-800-424-8802.

For precaution

- Clean any spills and dirt asap.
- Limit access to areas where you store chemicals and drugs.
- Seal any chemicals you'll throw and follow proper disposal rules.

- Put your dog in a separate room or crate if you'll do a house repair.
- Research your dog's food. Check its recalls to ensure it's not contaminated.
- Stay away from products that are mostly by-products and artificial flavorings.

#12: ELECTRIC SHOCK



This is the most common electrical injury in pets.

Many of its cases involve puppies.

But this can occur in all dogs. Regardless of age and breed.

"How does this happen?"

Your furry friend can get electric shock due to:

- Teething.
- Boredom.
- Curiosity.
- Tendency to chew any objects.

The number 1 cause of this emergency's chewing on a plugged electrical cord.

Some of the usual targets of our 4-legged friends are:

- TVs.
- Fans.
- Christmas lights.

However, other possible dangers are:

- Faulty wiring.
- Busted electrical circuits.

Now, why do dogs do this?

At 3 weeks old, most puppies start teething.¹³⁹

This may go on until 6 months.

So to ease their discomfort, they'll chew everything they see.

Even a dangling electrical cord.

But aside from this, many dogs also get the urge to bite things.

It could be out of boredom or curiosity.

Thus, due to these instincts...

Your fur baby's life can be at risk.

And here are 6 dangers you should know:

"How dangerous are electric shocks?"

Danger #1: Burns

Once your dog's body had contact with an electrical source...

A 'current' or flow of electricity will travel in it.

Which damages body tissues and causes burns.

Danger #2: Pulmonary edema

Apart from tissues...

Electric current can also injure the lungs.

This may result in a buildup of fluids in those organs.

Then it can develop minutes or days after the shock.

Also, your dog will have difficulty breathing.

And it could be deadly in severe cases.

Danger #3: Seizures

A shock also affects the brain.

So it may knock your dog unconscious for a while.

Or it can trigger sudden uncontrolled movements.

Danger #4: Arrhythmia

In simpler terms, this means an irregular pulse rate.

This happens when electricity enters the body.

Then it disrupts the normal heartbeat.

Danger #5: Cardiac arrest

Severe cases can cause a dog's heart to collapse.

Which might lead to '*cardiac arrest*.' Or when the heart stops beating.

Danger #6: Cataracts

Lastly, the trauma due to the shock can also injure the eyes.¹⁴⁰

An example of this is '*cataracts*.'

It's the clouding of the eyes. Which could be either 30% or 60%.

But it may progress to 100% or total blindness.

“How do I know if my dog got electrocuted?”

The most obvious signs are burns inside or around the mouth.

But you may also see your furry pal unconscious on the ground.

Particularly near an electrical outlet. And with a froth in their mouth.

Now, you must take any electrocuted dog to the hospital asap.

However, here's the tricky part.

In some cases, the signs don't show up right away.

So, how will you know as early as possible?

First, dogs who survived an electric shock may drool and cough a lot.

And they might also have:¹⁴¹

- Awful mouth odor.
- Bluish-tinged skin.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Involuntary jaw contraction.

The 1st sign's due to the damaged tissue caused by the current.

At the start, you'll only find wounds inside your dog's mouth.

But they can get infected.

Which results in pain and a stinky odor.

Besides these, a chewed electrical cord can also give you a hint.

So pay close attention to your fur baby. As well as in your surroundings.

What to do?

For emergency

Step #1: Don't touch your dog right away

They could still be linked to an electrical source.

So you'll be electrocuted too if you touch them with bare hands.


Thus, do the next step.

Step #2: Cut the electricity source

Switch off the main power or wall socket.

You can also wear rubber gloves (ones that electricians use).

Then carefully pull out the plug from the outlet.

 **Note:** Be careful if the area's wet. And avoid stepping on puddles if there are any (e.g., pee, spills).

Step #3: Move your dog away from the area

For your safety, ensure the power's off before you do this.

The shock can also make your furry friend bite harder.

So to move them away, slightly push them from the cable using a plastic or wooden pole.

Step #4: Check their breathing and pulse

To do the 1st one...

- Look: See if your dog's chest rises and falls.
- Listen: Check for breathing sounds in their nose and mouth.
- Feel: Put your hand near their snout to sense if there's air coming out.

Next, check for a heartbeat.

1. Make your furry pal lie down on their side.
2. Place your hand near their groin (inside their upper rear limb).
3. Or feel their left chest (under their front leg).

Step #5: Call your vet and bring your dog to the clinic

Step #6: Perform CPR

If you can't detect breathing or pulse, give your dog CPR.

You can also do this while on the way to the vet.

For the complete steps, check out [Option #6](#) in #4: Pica.

Reminders during and after hospitalization

- Serve soft food to your dog as their mouth's still painful.
- Switch diet slowly within 7 days to prevent an upset tummy.
- Consult your vet for a new meal plan that suits your fur baby.

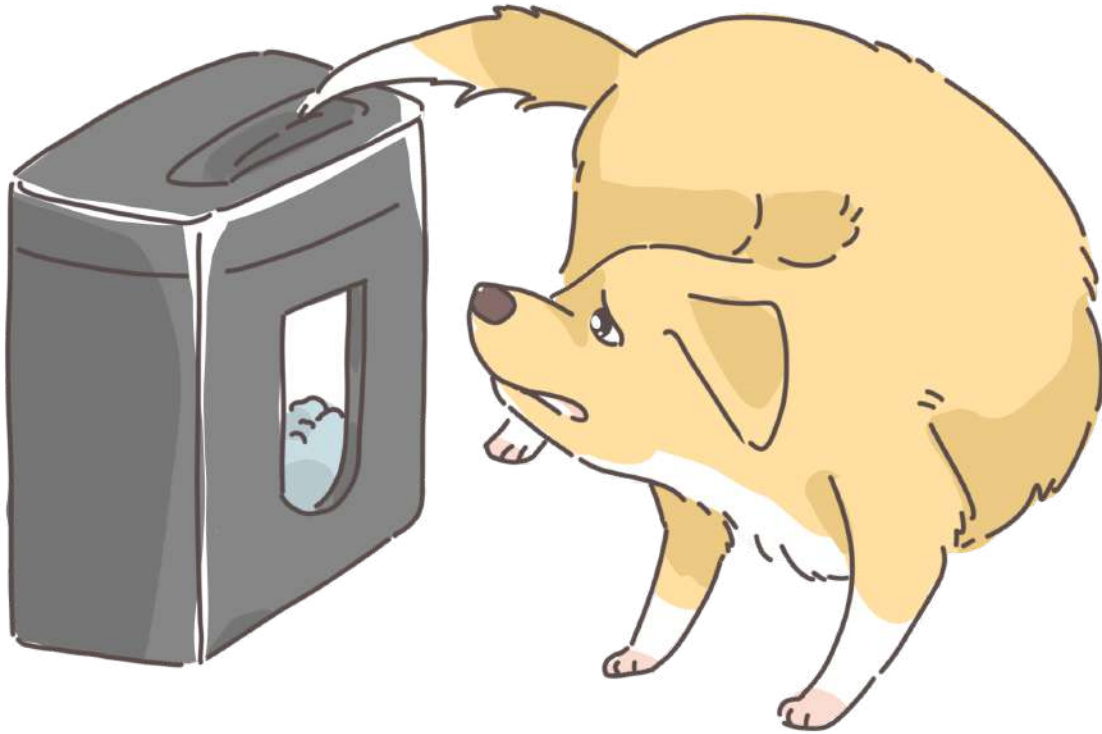
For precaution

“Out of sight, out of mind.”

Prevention's the best way to keep your dog safe from electric shocks.

- Always unplug unused appliances.
- Install cable raceways to hide electrical cords.
- Inspect electrical cords and throw faulty ones.
- Tape wires on the wall using cable organizers.
- Tie cords to prevent them from reaching the floor.
- Give your puppy a chew toy or long-lasting treats.
- Close the door in areas with damaged wires until fixed.

#13: PAPER SHREDDERS



Apart from electrical cords...

You must also keep your fur baby away from dangerous machines like this.

This emergency might be rare.

But it's possible.

And it has already happened to several dogs.^{142,143}

So if you have one of these at home...

Never let your guard down and keep reading.

Scary dangers of paper shredder

Usually, this machine's always plugged in and put in '*Auto Mode/Feed.*'

So it'll turn on and off on its own. Which saves energy and time.

This is convenient for people who use the shredder many times a day.

But because the machine switches on when its sensors detect something...

It can injure anyone by accident.

In most reports, dogs tried to eat some food dropped on top of the shredder.

And without knowing the possible danger...

Their tongue got stuck in the machine's blades.

Meanwhile, others had their tail or ear sucked by the shredding mechanism.

Either way, both will be a horrific sight for any dog parents.

Plus, a painful experience for any furry friend.

What to do?

For emergency

If your dog's body part got stuck on the paper shredder...

1. Remove the machine's plug or turn off the socket's power.
2. Never pull your dog forcefully.
3. Ask for help to cut the blades if the body part's still stuck.
4. Rush your fur baby to the nearest animal emergency.

5. While traveling, calm them by speaking in a gentle voice.

For precaution

Most dogs recover from this injury.

But they have to learn how to swallow again or eat soft food.

Also, the damage, the sound of your fur baby crying, and the haunting image of the accident would be a real nightmare.


So to prevent this mishap, you may get rid of the shredder.

Or take extra precautions at home:

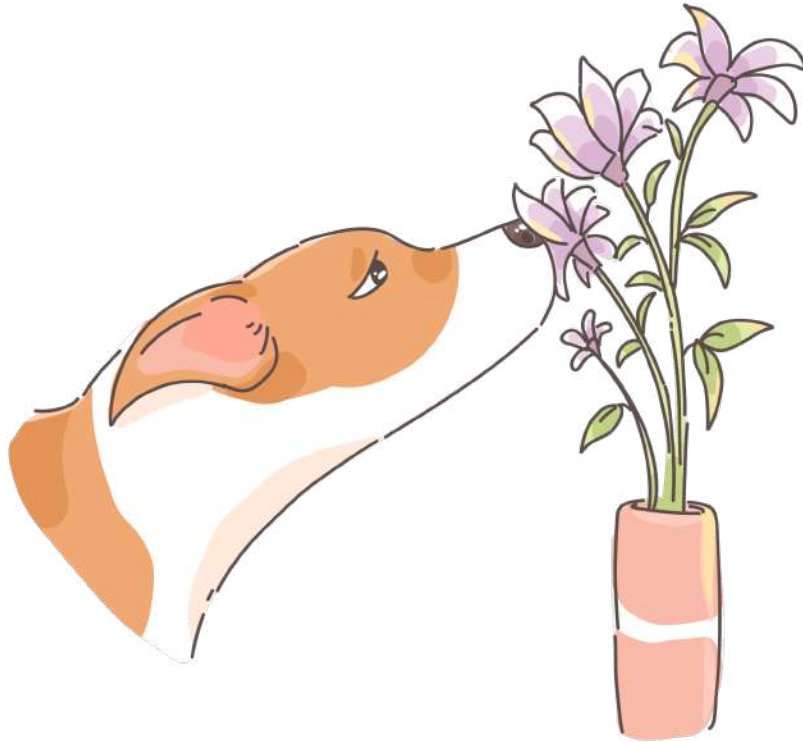
- If you can't throw it, keep it in a locked room.
- Unplug your paper shredder when not in use.
- Store it under the table (for little access to the opening).
- Remove your dog from the area while you're shredding.
- Switch to a shredder with a cover on the top or more safety features.

Also, to prevent your dog from licking the machine...

Never put any food above or near it. And avoid shredding food wrappers in it.

 **Warning:** This isn't only a hazard for your dog. You must also be careful while using it. And keep it away from children and other pets.

#14: POISONOUS PLANTS



You're sure the lawn outside has no pesticides that can harm your dog.

As well as your indoor plants.

But those chemicals aren't the only hazards you must be wary of.

Remember, our furry pals are curious fellows.

They may shove their snouts and chew on anything they see in the garden or inside the house.

And since your dog doesn't know if a plant's toxic or not, they may ingest some of it.

Then it can poison your dog or cost them their life.

To prevent this from happening...

Step #1: Be aware of the harmful plants you may find in your area

The 7 most reported toxic plants for dog are as follows:¹⁴⁴

#1: Azalea (*Rhododendron spp.*)



This flowering shrub was responsible for 188 poisoning cases in dogs in the US from 2001 to 2003. And the numbers go on until today.¹⁴⁵

Dogs will show signs of toxicity after eating only 0.2% of Azalea of their body weight.¹⁴⁶

So an adult 3 kg Chihuahua can be poisoned by ingesting 6 grams of its leaves or flowers.

The said parts of the plant contain 'grayanotoxin.' And it's a substance that's not deadly to humans but to animals.

#2: Lily (*Lilium and Hemerocallis spp.*)



All parts of this plant are toxic for dogs and cats.

But the latter suffers from more severe symptoms after exposure to its pollen.

Now, not all kinds of Lilies are highly toxic to dogs.

However, most of them are. And the ones below are the 6 most frequently reported dangerous types:¹⁴⁷

- Day Lilies.

- True Lilies.
- Calla Lilies.
- Peace Lilies.
- Peruvian Lilies.
- Lily of the Valley.

#3: Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)



Like Azaleas, this is also a famous ornamental plant due to its lovely flowers.

But ingesting only a few leaves of this can poison a dog.

And it's due to a substance called '*oleandrin*.'

A study discovered that 0.00042 oz (30 mg) of this per dog's body weight in kilograms are enough to cause irregular heartbeat.¹⁴⁸

Other signs are:

- Tremors.
- Seizures.
- Symptoms of blood pressure changes (e.g., weakness, fainting).



Note: Most flower bulbs are toxic to all dogs.


#4: Sago palm (*Cycas spp.*)



Dogs are the most common victims of this plant.

Sago palm has a high mortality rate of 30%.¹⁴⁹

Like Lily, all parts of this plant are toxic. So swallowing only 1 to 2 pieces of this can put a dog's life at risk.

 **Note:** The signs may show up within 15 minutes after the consumption:

- Tremors.
- Seizures.
- Heavy breathing.
- Blood pressure changes.

#5: Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)



Next, the seeds of this plant have '*ricin.*'

It's a highly potent toxin. And it interferes with the creation of protein resulting in cell death.

Thus, eating only a few seeds of castor bean can kill a dog or even a small child.

This is proven by a 12-week-old Mastiff puppy.¹⁵⁰


The dog ingested a castor bean. And they died hours after displaying symptoms.

#6: Kalanchoe (*Kalanchoe spp.*)



Vets say that this plant contains '*cardiac glycoside*'.¹⁵¹

It's a toxin that affects heart rate. And it may also cause '*hyperkalemia*' a.k.a high potassium level in the blood which can be lethal.

 **Note:** In summer, its flowers have higher levels of toxins. So most reported cases of poisoning in dogs happen during this season.

#7: Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*)





Lastly, all parts of this plant are poisonous - especially its seeds and flowers.

Autumn Crocus has a toxin named '*colchicine*.'

And based on a report, only 0.8 milligrams of this per dog's weight in kilogram is deadly.¹⁵²

But apart from these...

Here are other toxic plants you should know of:

Name of plant	Photo
Tulips (<i>Tulipa</i>).	 A close-up photograph of several orange tulips. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing the characteristic cup shape and others more open. The petals have a vibrant orange color with some lighter, almost white, variegation. Green leaves are visible at the base of the flowers.
Iris (<i>Iris sibirica</i>).	 A close-up photograph of several purple irises. The flowers are in full bloom, showing the intricate details of the petals and the central stamens. The petals are a deep purple color, and the stamens have a yellowish center. Green leaves are visible in the background.

Yew (*Taxus spp.*).



Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).



Daisy (*Bellis perennis*).



Mistletoe (*Viscum album*).



English Ivy (*Hedera helix*).



Amaryllis (*Amaryllis spp.*).



Dumbcane (*Dieffenbachia*).



Narcissus (*Narcissus spp.*).



Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*).



Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*).



Laburnum (*Cytisus laburnum*).



Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).



Eucalyptus (*Genus eucalyptus*).



Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*).



Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*).



Thorn apple (*Datura stramonium*).



Bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*).



Morning glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*).



Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*).



Breadfruit tree (*Monstera deliciosa*).



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*).



Chrysanthemum (*Compositae* spp.).



Bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*).



Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*).



Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*).



Croton (*Codiaeum variegatum pictum*).



Philodendron (*Philodendron scandens*).



Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ferrugineum*).



Step #2: Know the symptoms of plant poisoning in dogs

Some plants may cause a dog to show signs right away. Others might not.

Also, symptoms will vary per plant and amount ingested.

But typically, the common signs of plant poisoning are:

- Lethargy.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Seizures.
- Weakness.
- Loss of appetite.
- Extreme salivation.

What to do?

For emergency:

If you suspect your dog of plant poisoning, call the APCCa.k.a Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435 to know the right thing to do with your case.

ASPCA's hotline's available all day throughout the year.

But if you saw what your dog ate, and they're showing some of the signs above:

1. Call your vet and tell them about the situation.
2. Take pics of the plant. Or get a sample of it and secure it in a container.
3. Wash your hands thoroughly before handling your dog.
4. Bring them to the nearest emergency animal hospital.

For prevention:

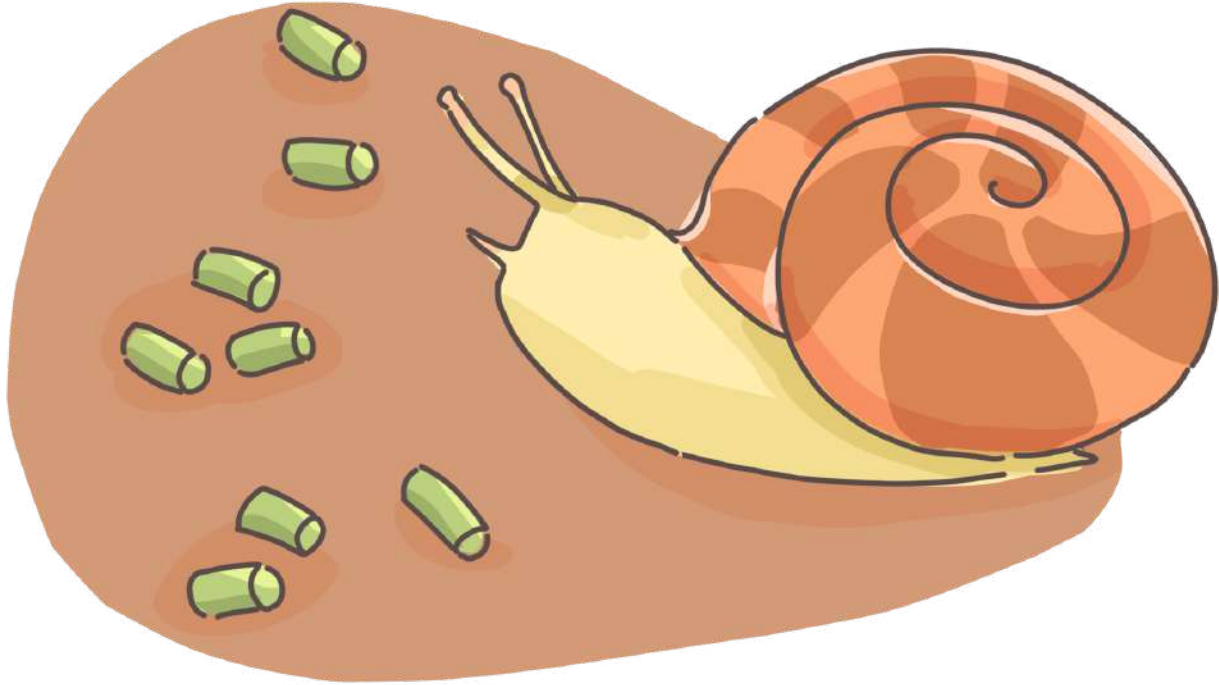
Take note of all the plants above. And never bring them inside or plant them around your house.

But if you're looking for something to make your place greener, get dog-safe plants instead.

Sometimes, the non-toxic ones look odd and have unusual names, such as:

- Basil.
- Thyme.
- Orchids.
- Gloxinia.
- Camellia.
- Fuchsias.
- Sunflower.
- Bromeliad.
- Echeveria.
- Date palm.
- Rosemary.
- Baby tears.
- Zebra plant.
- Parlor palm.
- Boston fern.
- Spider plant.
- African violet.
- Snapdragon.
- Ponytail palm.
- Staghorn fern.
- Magnolia bush.
- Polka dot plant.
- Bird's nest fern.
- Friendship plant.
- Calathea orbifolia.
- Watermelon peperomia.

#15: SLUG AND SNAIL BAITS



Like rat poison, this type of pest control has tasty ingredients too.

Say bran and molasses.

Due to the bait's tempting flavor, it can lure slugs and snails into the area. Then make them eat large amounts of the toxin.

And voila!

Your slimy problem's finished.

However, apart from attracting those garden pests...

These baits can entice other animals, too. And this includes your furry friend.

Since the poison's masked with a yummy scent, your dog may lick or eat the whole thing. Unaware of the danger it brings.

Or, your dog might also step on the bait by accident as they roam in the garden.

Then they'll ingest the toxin once they lick their paws.

"How common is slug bait poisoning in dogs?"

The number of cases is lower than those who ate human medicine and toxic food.

Partly, this might be because baits with metaldehyde are now banned in some places. Like in the United Kingdom.

The toxin's extremely deadly to non-target animals.

Plus, it may pollute water sources as well.¹⁵³

So some countries banned its use outdoors.

But, this type of poisoning is common in wet, low-lying areas. As these are the places where slugs and snails usually stay.

Now, these might be hard to recognize at times as they come in different forms:

- Gel.
- Liquid.
- Pellets.
- Powder.
- Granules.

However, no matter what their appearance is, it's known that...

Slug and snail baits are deadly to dogs even in small amounts

The toxic ingredient in these products is called *metaldehyde*.

It causes slugs and snails to lose a lot of body fluids. Which then leads them to death.

But in dogs, this toxin mainly affects the brain.

Then it can lead to:

- Coma.
- Seizures.
- Liver failure.
- Severe tremors.

The dangerous dose of metaldehyde in most mammals is 45.36-272.16 mg/lb (100-600 mg/kg).¹⁵⁴

So, only 1/4-1 tsp (1,000-6,000 mg) is enough to poison a 22-lb (10-kg) dog.

As you may notice, the range is wide.

It's because the effects also vary depending on how much metaldehyde a bait has. Normally, this can be 1.5%-5%.



Warning: Metaldehyde poisoning may result in death if not treated asap.

"How will I know if a slug bait has poisoned my dog?"

In this case, the 1st usual sign is vomiting. And it may also come with panting and drooling.

This means a substance is irritating their tummy. Plus, their body's trying to get it out of their system.

Soon, your dog may start displaying other symptoms. Or also known as the *'shake and bake syndrome.'*

And it's because they'll show these signs:

- Convulsions.
- Wobbly gait.
- Restlessness.

Now, if your dog hasn't received any medical attention yet after hours...

They might have an abnormally high body temperature.

Over time, this can impair their organs. Then result in coma or liver failure.



Note: The symptoms may appear a few minutes or 3 hours after ingestion.

What to do?

For emergency

There's no specific cure for this kind of poisoning.

But a dog's chances of surviving are high if treated early.

So if you saw your furry friend ate a slug bait, call your vet asap.

Then bring your dog to the clinic.

If you didn't witness it, do this as soon as your dog shows the early signs above.

When treated early, most dogs recover from this after 2 or 3 days.

However, if for any reason, you can't reach your vet...

Contact any of the pet poison control hotlines below:


- *Pet Poison Hotline: (855) 764-7661.*
- *ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC): (888) 426-4435.*

The experts on the phone will ask you for details about your dog and the slug bait.

Once they know the problem, they'll give you first aid instructions. This is if traveling to the nearest hospital will take you hours.

Then the experts might also relay your situation to the vets there. So that they can prepare before you arrive.

After the consultation, you need to pay a fee. And the amount can be around \$75.

 **Warning:** Don't make your dog vomit or give them activated charcoal if the experts didn't tell you to do so.

But if you're given instructions, follow the dose they said.

You may also need the tips in steps [#4](#) and [#5](#) in [#5: Human over-the-counter \(OTC\) pills](#).

For prevention

Tip #1: Use a safer slug control

Although a dog has been poisoned by this bait before and survived...

Chances are, they may still be attracted to it. And repeat the same mistake.

Besides this, other animals in the area who can access your yard might also see the baits as snacks.

So to prevent any of these from happening...

Why not switch to a pet-safe slug and snail control?

There are 2 alternatives that you can use. And they're both as effective as metaldehyde baits.

Iron phosphate baits

Instead of metaldehyde, other slug baits use *iron phosphate*.

To explain it simply, it's a stomach toxin.¹⁵⁵

It mainly targets the tissues of a slug or snail's digestive system.

And this causes them to lose their appetite and die slowly.

But don't fret.

It's highly toxic to those garden pests.

However, it's not deadly for your furry friend.¹⁵⁶

Although dogs who ate large amounts of this may suffer from an upset stomach. And show these common signs:

- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.



Note: Iron phosphate is also safe for humans. But still, wear gloves if you'll handle this type of bait. Then wash your hands well with soap and water.

Caffeine solution

Most people like the aroma of freshly-brewed coffee.

But did you know that slugs and snails dislike it?

So caffeine can keep them away from your garden.

And it also helps in reducing their population.

A study found that pouring 1% or 2% coffee on the soil made all the slugs leave the area.

Then, later on, most of them died from caffeine toxicity.¹⁵⁷

Thus, this is more effective than sprinkling coffee grounds.

Now, how is it done?

1. Mix equal parts of brewed coffee and water.
2. Pour the solution into the parts of the soil you want to defend.

Tip #2: Store slug and snail baits in a container

Same with the other toxic products I mentioned before...

Keep all your slug and snail baits in storage where dogs and children can't reach.

- Put the pack or box in a covered container.
- Store them in the cupboard or a high cabinet (away from food).

But if only a low drawer's available, install a baby lock to it.

This is to prevent your dog from opening it by accident.

Well. Never underestimate a curious dog.

If they smell something interesting, they'll do anything to get it.

Also, do this as well, even if you're using an iron phosphate bait.



Note: Check the products' labels for more instructions on how to store them properly.

Tip #3: Keep your dog from the treated area

If you're still using metaldehyde baits in your garden or saw some in your neighbor's yard...

Restrict your dog from going in those areas for at least 2 weeks.

Those slug baits won't release metaldehyde forever.

Usually, the toxin will stay in the soil and be effective for up to 10 days.¹⁵⁸
This is if the treated area's often moist.

So it might be below or over 10 days in other soil conditions or temperatures.

Thus, to be sure, you may avoid the place for more than 2 weeks.



Note: If it's your yard, flush the bait remnants with a water hose. Do this before letting your dog play near it.

#16: FERTILIZERS



While taking care of your garden...

You must also ensure your dog's well-being.

Because what you *'feed'* to it can be safe for you...

But not for your furry friend.

And some dogs love playing in garden beds.

In 2017, 2.6% of the calls received by the Animal Poison Control Center, a.k.a. APCC, were due to fertilizers.

But even in the following years...

These often hold the 10th spot in the most common toxins in pets.

What makes fertilizers attractive to dogs?

First, they smell and taste yummy for your furry friend.

It's because most fertilizers may contain the following:

- Corn.
- Fish meal.
- Corn cobs.
- Bone meal.
- Blood meal.

Due to these, your dog might not hesitate to dig your garden if they sniffed some.

Or rip a bag of fertilizers sitting on the ground.

Then eat all its contents.

Why dogs shouldn't eat fertilizers?

These plant food have '*N-P-K*.'

It stands for:

- N-nitrogen.
- P-phosphorus.
- K-potassium.

You'll notice its ratio on the packaging.

For example, you may see '29-3-4' in lawn fertilizers.

It means the product has:

- 29% nitrogen.
- 3% phosphorus.
- 4% potassium.

Now, these kinds of fertilizers aren't highly toxic.

But the ingredients may irritate a dog's tummy.

So if your dog ingests a small amount of these...

They might have a mild stomach issue.

Thus, watch out for the signs below:

- Lethargy.
- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Excessive drooling.



Note: Usually, these show up 2-10 hours after ingestion. Then they'll be gone within 12-24 hours.

However, things may get worse due to 3 factors:

Hazard #1: Large dose

If your dog ate a huge amount of fertilizers...

They could be at risk of:¹⁵⁹

Bowel obstruction

Take products with bone meals as an example.

As their name suggests...

They're made of dried animal bones.

And these entice dogs to consume fertilizers.

But did you know that if eaten too much...

These ground bones can form into a big '*cement-like*' ball inside a dog's tummy?

It could block their intestines.

Then, as a result, liquids and food won't be able to pass through them.¹⁶⁰

And this may lead to:

- Dehydration.
- Damage of intestinal walls.
- Inability to absorb nutrients.

Apart from these...

Eating large doses can also cause:

- Bloat.
- Stomach pain.
- Severe vomiting.
- Rear limb weakness.

"How much fertilizer is unsafe for dogs?"

It's considered large if the amount's $> 0.23 \text{ g/lb}$ ($> 0.5 \text{ g/kg}$) of a dog's body weight.

Pancreatitis

This is a painful condition.

It causes the pancreas to swell. Which is an organ that releases enzymes that aid in digestion.

Now, fertilizers may contain blood meal.

It's 12% nitrogen. And when eaten by dogs, it can trigger pancreatitis.

As well as mild signs of an upset stomach.

Hazard #2: Molds

These are fungi that can grow in fertilizers due to extra moisture.

It happens due to a lack of sunlight.

But also if you spray too much water on treated soil.

Or if you put a lot of plant food in an area.

Now, if your dog ingested a moldy fertilizer...

They may experience:

- Tremors.
- Seizures.

Hazard #3: Additives

Lastly, check your fertilizer ingredients.

Because the more additives it has...

The more dangerous it is for your dog.

Aside from N-P-K and tasty meals...

Some products may also contain:

- Iron.
- Zinc.
- Boron.
- Cobalt.
- Copper.
- Disulfoton.
- Manganese.
- Molybdenum.
- Milorganite (sewage-based).

And these can poison your furry pal in large doses.

Meanwhile, other fertilizers might have:

- Fungicides.
- Herbicides.
- Insecticides.

So if ingested, these may cause other symptoms, such as:

- Loss of balance.
- Eye or skin irritation.
- Stiff and sore muscles.
- Uncontrolled peeing/pooping.

Thus, your dog must not ingest these in any form.

May it be:

- Solid.

- Liquid.
- Granular.

What to do?

For emergency

1. Remove your dog from the area asap.
2. Collect as much info as possible.
3. Identify what fertilizer your dog ingested. And estimate how much they ate.
4. Read the product's label for ingredients.
5. Contact your vet or animal poison control center for first-aid instructions.

For precaution

- Place fertilizers in a sealed container.
- Always keep their bags tightly closed.
- Put your garden products in storage out of your dog's reach.
- Never allow your furry friend in areas where you applied fertilizers.
- If it's a diluted solution, ensure it has dried enough before letting your dog near it.
- Read the fertilizer's label carefully for instructions and how long it lasts on the soil.

“How long should I keep my dog off the yard after fertilizing?”

Generally, this must be at least 48 hours.¹⁶¹

If it's in a solid or powdered form...

Ensure you spread them evenly throughout the whole yard.

This reduces the risk of poisoning in dogs. As the solution won't be too concentrated when licked.

But for fluid products...

Experts say it won't affect your dog once it's dry.¹⁶²

So inspect the treated area first before bringing your furry friend.

Also, to be safe, check the product's packaging again.

Usually, it'll give instructions on how to use the fertilizer around pets.

“Are there fertilizers safe for dogs?”

It's easy to store garden products in places your furry pal can't access.

But keeping your dog off your yard for 3 or more days can be inconvenient.

Both for you and your dog.

So, to keep your lawn and dog healthy...

Consider other safer alternatives below.

Option #1: Grass clippings

When you cut your lawn...

There would be grass leftovers.

These are either lying on the ground. Or they're caught by your mower.

But before you dispose of them...

You can put those short pieces of grass on the lawn.

Then leave them to decompose as fertilizers.

They're safer than products with additives.

But as long as the grass isn't treated with any chemicals recently.

And also, if your dog didn't consume a large amount of clippings.

These have other benefits to your lawn too, like:

- Being a food source for soil bacteria.
- Enhancing sandy or heavy clay soil.¹⁶³
- Giving 25% of your lawn's nutrient needs.¹⁶⁴

Option #2: Manure fertilizers

It may sound gross.

But you can also use animal manure as a fertilizer.¹⁶⁵

It's not highly toxic when ingested.

However, your dog can experience the following:

- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.

Also, they may get a disease by eating it.

So to prevent this, let it dry for 3-4 months to remove the odor that attracts dogs.

Plus, check your local laws first to see if you can use manure as a fertilizer in your area.



Note: Like insecticides, these '*safer*' choices aren't 100% risk-free. They could be milder. But too much of anything is bad - even for your dog.

#17: COMPOST



You're doing the planet a favor by recycling organic matter.

Say turning leaves or food scraps into fertilizers.

You call this '*composting*.'

And it has many benefits for the environment, such as:

- Recycles nutrients.
- Helps prevent erosion.
- Improves soil condition.
- Reduces human food waste.
- Increases water retention (less irrigation).¹⁶⁶

But although it's good for mother Earth...

Compost can be toxic for your furry friend.

It's a garden product.

So along with fertilizers...

It's also the 10th most common pet toxin.

"Why do dogs like compost?"

They're drawn to its stinky smell.

It might be gross to you.

But the foul odor can be interesting to your furry pal.

So they want to investigate it more.

And there's no better way to do it than shoving their snout on the pit.

Then have a taste of the decaying table scraps.

Yuck!

Well. Dogs are scavengers.

So as long as they smell food...

They don't care whether it's garbage or not.

Why should you stop your dog from eating compost?

As the food in it decays and grows mold...

Fungi will appear.

Then they'll produce a harmful substance, a.k.a. '*tremorgenic mycotoxin*.'

It's a poison that causes tremors that'll last for hours or days.

But usually, it'll trigger early signs first, like:¹⁶⁷

- Anxiety.
- Vomiting.
- Excessive drooling.
- Abnormally high body temperature.

These may appear within 30 minutes to hours after ingestion.

Then they can lead to:

- Seizures.
- Lack of coordination.

“How much compost is toxic for dogs?”

There's no exact dose yet.

But even a small amount of it can poison your dog.¹⁶⁸

Meanwhile, a bigger dosage can lead to seizures and, sometimes, death.

Apart from this danger...

Compost contains table scraps.

And as said earlier, these greasy food pose health risks to dogs.

Plus, it may contain ingredients that are toxic to dogs.

Say onions, grapes, or coffee grounds.

What to do?

For emergency

There's no antidote for compost poisoning in dogs.

So call your vet or the pet poison control center for first aid.

Then bring your dog to the clinic at once.

Typically, they'll flush the toxins out of the system.

Vets will also give them a muscle relaxant to stop the tremors.

And they'll regulate your dog's temperature.



Note: The earlier it's treated, the faster their recovery. If taken care of, most furbabies recover after 24-48 hours.

For precaution

For indoor compost

- Get a steel bin with a tight-fitting lid.
- Secure the container with a strap or lock.
- Keep it in a place your dog can't access.
- Consider using an electric composter that breaks down food.

For outdoor compost

- Build a high fence around the area.
- Follow proper EPA composting guidelines.
- Never allow your dog near it or any areas with decaying matter.

#18: INSECT BITES



As dogs explore their surroundings...

They tend to shove their snouts on anything they see.

May it be a beehive or an anthill.

That's why stings are another common problem many dog parents face.

And if you suspect your fur baby of getting bitten or stung...

Here are the things you must know.

"How dangerous are insect bites to dogs?"

Their effects range from mild skin irritation to a deadly shock.

The latter's a severe allergic reaction called...

'Anaphylactic shock'

This doesn't happen on all bitten dogs.

But if your fur baby was stung by a bee (or any venomous insect) before...

They may develop an allergy to it.

Then have a severe reaction next time - like this shock.

So observe your dog closely for a few hours.

And call your vet once they show these signs of bite allergy:¹⁶³

- Swollen face.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Bluish gum and tongue.
- 'Hives' or raised itchy bumps.
- Excessive drooling and vomiting.

Besides this, how your dog reacts to bites will depend on the following factors:

- Length of exposure.
- Presence of venom.
- Your dog's allergic reaction.
- Type and number of insects attacked.

You can treat some cases at home.

But others need medical attention.

So watch out for these early signs of a bite/sting:

- Blisters.
- Swelling.
- Redness in a specific area.
- Constant pawing/scratching.

And then, identify the insect that bit your dog.

To help you with this...

I gathered vital info on the 5 possible culprits and their first aid:

Danger #1: Bees, wasps, & hornets

These insects have painful stings.

It's due to the venom they release. Which has proteins that affect:¹⁶⁴

- Skin cells.
- Immune system.

As a result, their sting causes pain or burning for 1-2 hours.

So your dog may show::

- Lameness.
- Excessive vocalization.

Risks

Besides pain and swelling...

These insects' stings can also trigger an allergic reaction.

This will cause more symptoms in highly sensitive dogs, such as:

- Hives.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Collapse.
- Low blood pressure.

Also, multiple stings can lead to a deadly shock. As well as kidney injuries.¹⁶⁵

A German Shepherd died due to the former.

Based on the study, the dog had around 150 bee stings.¹⁶⁶

And she lost her life even before the treatment.

What to do?

Bees leave their stingers on their victims.

And these continue to produce venom.

So get rid of those on your dog asap.

To do this properly, follow the steps below:

1. Inspect your furry friend's body for stingers.
2. Get a credit card or clean gauze. (Or anything firm, even your fingernail.)
3. Scrape it over the area with the stinger.
4. Repeat until it's gone.



Note: Never use tweezers to remove a bee stinger. You'll only squeeze more venom into their system. Also, avoid pinching or pulling it out.

Now, once removed...

Soothe the skin

Make a thick paste of baking soda.

Then apply it on the affected areas to ease pain and itchiness.

For multiple stings, give your dog an '*oatmeal bath*' instead.

As it's not only a yummy breakfast but also a natural moisturizer.¹⁶⁷

1. Grind oats into fine powder.
2. Fill the tub half with lukewarm water.
3. Pour at least 1 cup of ground oats on it.
4. Stir to distribute the oats.
5. Place a rug on the bottom for traction.
6. Put your dog inside the tub.
7. Scoop an oatmeal mixture using your hand.
8. Pour it on your dog and gently massage their body.
9. Soak them for 10-15 minutes.
10. Rinse them lightly (avoid removing all oats on their skin).
11. Move your dog out of the tub.
12. Dab their body with a towel.

Then, reduce the swelling of the bites:

1. Put a cold compress or ice pack on the swollen areas.
2. Do this for at least 10 minutes.

Danger #2: Fire ants

They usually sting dogs on their feet or noses.

As these parts often come into contact with their mounds or trails.

And like bees, fire ants also have venom.¹⁶⁸

Which often results in itchy, painful blisters.

It's rare for a fire ant bite to be fatal.

However, there are still hazards to consider.

Risks

Number of stings	Effects on dogs
1-2	Redness. Itchiness. Raised sores. Mild pain in the bitten area.
More than 2	Swelling. Difficulty breathing. Puts some dogs at risk of severe reactions. E.g., puppies, old, sick, with open wounds.

What to do?

1. Remove your dog from the area (e.g., trail, ant mound).
2. Get a dampened towel.
3. Use it to wipe their body and get rid of ants.
4. Monitor your furry pal closely for signs of allergic reaction.

Do you notice many anthills in your garden?

Boil water and pour it on the mound.

Experts say fluids heated at 150°F (65.56°C) effectively kill fire ants.¹⁶⁹

As well as other insects underground, like:

- Wasps.
- Termites.
- Yellowjackets.

Danger #3: Mosquitoes

These cause dogs to suddenly lick or chew their bodies due to itch.

They may do this for minutes or hours.

And you'll also notice rashes on their skin.

While other dogs may not show any signs of discomfort at all.

But luckily, mosquito bites don't have long-term effects.

However, being bitten by a disease-carrying one can cause:

- Dengue.¹⁷⁰
- Heartworm disease.¹⁷¹

What to do?

Help relieve your fur baby's itchiness by applying a cold compress on their rashes.

But if they're itchy everywhere, give them a refreshing oatmeal bath.



Note: Check your dog's condition from time to time. Typical signs of dengue are high fever and pain near the eyes. Meanwhile, it's persistent cough and fatigue for heartworm.

Danger #4: Flies

These insects bite too.

But when they do...

They might also deposit eggs on your dog's skin.

Those will hatch within a few days.

Then the larvae will crawl around.

And they may bury deep in your dog's skin.

So if your fur baby has open wounds, they're at risk of...

Risks

- Swelling.
- Bacterial infection.

Signs

Type of fly	Effects on dogs
Black fly	Round red marks. Flat or swollen wounds.
Horse fly	More painful bites.

- Crusty wounds.
- Larvae/flies in the coat.
- Red ring-like bites (mostly in the belly).

What to do?

- Bathe your dog regularly.
- Keep their place and bowls clean.
- Clean affected areas using warm water.
- Trim matted fur with poop to prevent attracting flies.
- Remove scabs/dried blood with cotton soaked in warm water.
- Keep your dog indoors (especially during the fly season - e.g., summer, spring, fall¹⁷²).





Note: Most dogs get bitten by flies by laying on the grass. Or staying outside late at night.

Danger #5: Spider

30 out of over 43,000 types of these have venom.¹⁷³

And the 2 top culprits of bites in dogs are:

Type of spider	Markings	Picture
Widow spiders	Red hourglass-shaped on the abdomen	

Recluse spiders	Violin-shaped	
-----------------	---------------	--

Risks

Widow spiders usually cause serious effects to their victims.

Say vomiting and severe swelling.

Meanwhile, recluse spiders are one of the most dangerous ones as they:¹⁷⁴

- Kill muscle tissues.
- Cause 6-8 hour-long pain.
- Leave deep wounds and ‘*bulls-eye*’ marks (red circle).

Also, some dogs may have an allergic reaction to the bites.


So look out for the symptoms I listed earlier.

What to do?

This has similar steps for bee stings.

1. Know what kind of spider bit them.
2. Check your dog’s immediate surroundings.
3. Wash the bite using water and mild soap.
4. Put baking soda paste on the area to ease itching.
5. Apply an ice pack to the wound for 10 minutes.

6. Make your dog wear an [Elizabethan collar](#) to prevent them from licking the wound.
7. Call your vet once they show signs of an allergic reaction.

 **Note:** Symptoms may appear 8 hours after the incident. Then these can progress to:

- Cramps.
- Diarrhea.
- Muscle pains.

#19: COLLAR ACCIDENTS



If used properly, this benefits both you and your fur baby.

A collar restrains your dog when outside.

Keeping them from running away and getting into trouble.

Also, it carries their identification.

Say their ID or tag.

However, if you're not careful...

Its risks easily outweigh these advantages.

In a year, around 26,000 dogs have accidents related to collars.¹⁷⁵

These range from skin issues to deadly injuries.

And every fur parent must be aware of these hazards.

9 hidden dangers of dog collars

Danger #1: Strangulation

Many accidents happen due to tags getting caught up in:

- Fences.
- Kennels.
- Crate bars.
- Deck flooring.
- Floor-mounted vents.

Which then causes panic dogs.

So they'll tirelessly pull themselves out to escape.

But it'll only result in injuries.

And they could choke to death if no one can help them at the moment.

Here's another common scenario.

At first, 2 dogs may playfully bite each other's necks.

But one muzzle can get entangled in another's collar if it's too loose.

Then both of them will panic and pull away.

Which twists and tightens the tangled collar even more.

And choke the dog who's wearing it.

These may all seem like tragic scenes in a tv show.

But sadly, these have already happened to many fur babies worldwide.^{176,177}

Danger #2: Injuries

If the collar's loose, a dog's body part may get stuck in it by accident.

This could happen to their mouth while grooming.

Or their limbs as they scratch their head or ears.

Then they could get badly hurt as they pull their body parts out.

Which results in leg injuries or even broken teeth.

On the contrary...

Your dog's collar can be too tight as well.

And it could cut into their neck.

It usually happens if a grown-up dog hasn't changed their collar since they were a puppy.

Danger #3: Distress

Wearing something around your neck doesn't feel nice.

So imagine how your dog feels.

Especially if it's too rough or tight.

The discomfort will stress them out.

Plus, they can't also move with ease.

And you'll know if your fur baby's uncomfy if they whine.

Or keep scratching their neck.

As if they're trying to unbuckle the collar.

Danger #4: Skin irritation

Aside from the discomfort...

A tight collar will also rub on a dog's neck.

Which leads to inflammation and infection.

Danger #5: Hair loss

If the collar causes skin issues, you'll also notice bald spots around your dog's neck.

Danger #6: Neck injury

64% of dog parents said their fur babies always pull the leash.¹⁷⁸

And it's a behavior they want to change.

So if your 4-legged friend's one of them...

Having a collar will increase the risk of injuries.

They can hurt their neck while pulling the lead linked to their collar.

Or as you jerk the leash too hard while your dog's pulling in the opposite direction.

Studies found that the pressure's enough to cause injury in dogs.¹⁷⁹

Plus, the neck's a sensitive area.

Your fur baby may have thick fur.

But a dog's skin's thinner than a human's.¹⁸⁰

The former's only 3-5 cells thick while the latter's 10-15.

Danger #7: Thyroid trauma

Now, aside from visible injuries...

The strain from pulling the leash can also hurt their insides.

For example, there are thyroid glands in the neck.

So if those are in constant stress due to the collar...

The glands can swell and bruise.

When this happens...

Your dog's thyroid will become swollen.

Then to reduce it...

Their immune system will produce white blood cells.

But high levels of those can cause thyroid problems.

Danger #8: Eye/ear issues

Pulling the leash limits blood flow.

Especially to a dog's eyes and ears.

And constant tugging can also affect those organs. Then cause them to swell.

How do you know if your dog has a neck injury?

- Yelping.
- Neck pain.
- Reduced appetite or thirst.
- Reluctance to move their head.
- Doesn't want to be touched around the collar.

What to do?

For emergency

In cases of strangulation, you may either:

- Unbuckle the collar.
- Cut it asap to set your fur baby free.

Usually, the 1st one's hard to do since a dog's panicking.

And another furry pal's mouth might be stuck near the collar.

So cutting it's the best and fastest option. Since time's of the essence here.



Note: Be careful while doing this as you may get bitten while trying to help. Also, for cases like this, bring a Swiss Army knife with you

when going outside with your dog. But check first if the places you'll go to allow it.

How to treat collar sores on dogs?

An ill-fitting collar and a choking accident may also cause wounds.

So in case this happens, here are the things you must do:

1. Remove the collar from your dog.
2. Calm them down using your '*baby voice*' and stroking them lightly.
3. Apply gentle pressure on the wound if it's bleeding.
4. Keep doing step #3 until the bleeding stops.
5. Trim the fur around the wound to treat it properly.
6. Wash the area with warm water to remove debris.
7. Dry it with a clean towel.
8. Put an antiseptic solution on it.
9. Apply antibiotic ointment on the wound.
10. Maintain the sores. Do this by:
 - Keeping them dry and clean.
 - Changing the bandage regularly.
 - Wrapping them loosely with dry, clean gauze.
 - Reapplying ointment twice a day (or as per instructions).


Afterward, check the sores daily for infection.

Typically, wounds heal for up to 6 weeks.¹⁸¹

So bring your fur baby to the vet if they get worse. Or if you notice these signs:

- Fever.
- Increase in size.

- Constant swelling.
- Pus on the wounds.

 **Warning:** Never use rubbing alcohol, shampoos, soaps, or oils to clean your dog's wounds. Unless it's advised by a vet. Also, don't apply products with '*corticosteroids*.' These delay healing and causes infection.¹⁸²

For precaution

Tip #1: Find the perfect fit

An wrongly-sized collar's often the root of most accidents.

So try several options to find the item that suits your dog best.

Then while fitting, ensure only 2 of your fingers can fit between the collar and your fur baby's neck.

- If it's too tight, you couldn't insert a finger in it.
- If it's too loose, your whole hand can still get inside.

Also, check how the collar looks on your dog while they're:

- Standing.
- Sitting down.

Do this because it fits your furry friend differently depending on their position.

Tip #2: Check their collar regularly

Using the sizing tips above, see if the item still fits your dog well.

Replace it if it's too tight or loose. Or if you notice skin irritation or sores.

Tip #3: Remove the collar if not in use

If your fur baby's inside the home...

There's no need to make them wear a collar. As well as if you'll put them in a crate.

The tag can get stuck in places. Then choke your dog to death if no one's around to help them.

Also, take their collar off whenever they're:

- Sleeping.
- Playing with another dog.
- Left unattended at home.

Tip #4: Watch your dog closely while outside

Remember the story I shared earlier?

A dog's teeth or mouth might get stuck in another's collar.

Or their tag can get caught in each other's lead while playing.

So be extra alert if you'll walk multiple dogs.

As well as if you'll take your fur baby for a stroll in a park.

Tip #5: Never tug your dog's leash

It may stop your 4-legged friend a while from barking or lunging.

But pulling their lead won't teach them your desired behavior.

Instead, it might only injure their neck or cause trauma.

Tip #6: Try safer options

Due to many collar accidents...

Companies develop products that unsnap when a dog gets stuck.

These are called '*breakaway*' or quick-release collars.

And they may help prevent choking incidents.

Also, there are chest harnesses that can keep your dog safe and comfy.

Unlike collars that put too much stress on a furry pal's neck.

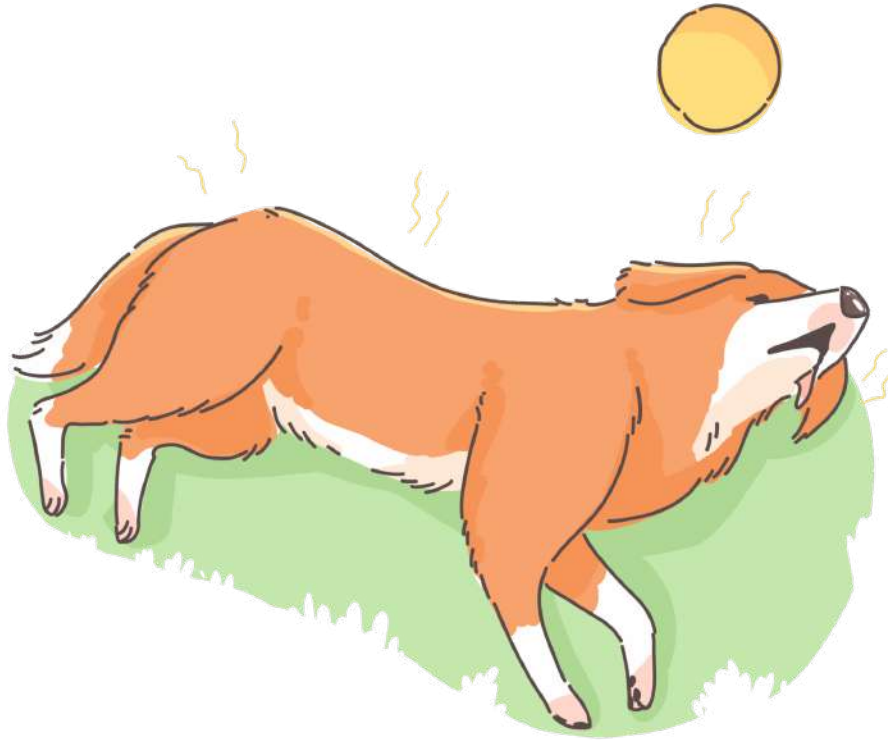
Tip #7: Get your dog microchipped

Instead of putting on a collar on your fur baby with a hanging tag...

Consider microchipping to prevent this type of accident.

It's safer. Plus, your dog will still have their identification with them while not wearing anything.

#20: HEATSTROKE



Lastly, your furry friend can get this too.

The risk's especially high during summer.

As well as in places with hot, humid climates.

"How does this happen?"

Heatstroke occurs when a dog's body temperature's above normal.

But they can't cool down well.

This is anything over 101-102.5°F (38.3-39.2°C).¹⁸³

Although your 4-legged friend has sweat glands on their paw pads...

Those are only a few.

So they can't perspire as much as you do.

Thus, to cool down their body...

Dogs mainly rely on panting.

But there are situations when this isn't enough.

3 common causes of heatstroke in dogs

- Being left inside a parked car.
- Over exhaustion during a hot day.
- Lack of access to water and shade under the heat.

Other factors also put some fur babies at risk, such as:

- Obesity.
- Old/young age.
- Being physically unfit.
- *'Brachycephalic syndrome.'*
- Existing heart or lung disorders.

You'll find the 4th one in short-nosed breeds, like:

- Pugs.
- Boxers.
- Bulldogs.
- Pekingese dogs.

Due to the shape of their heads and muzzles...

These dogs have narrow nostrils. As well as tiny *'tracheas'* (windpipes).¹⁸⁴

Thus, they have breathing difficulties.

Which makes them more prone to this condition than other breeds.

How dangerous is heatstroke in dogs?

This progress quickly. So it can lead to death within only an hour.

Studies show heatstroke has a 50% mortality rate in dogs.¹⁸⁵

And it's because this condition causes:

- Tissue damage.
- Decreased blood flow.
- Organ damage or failure.

So, it's best to spot the signs early to save your furry baby.

“How can I tell if my dog has heatstroke?”

- Thick saliva.
- Disorientation.
- Heavy panting.
- High breathing and heart rate.
- Unusual gum color (red to bluish).
- Body temperature above 104°F (40°C).

“Can a dog recover from a heatstroke?”

This is possible if they received medical attention early.

And also if they didn't have an extremely high body temperature.

What to do?

For emergency

Step #1: Bring them to a cooler area

Quickly move your dog to shade if you're outside.

Step #2: Cool them down

Do these to help lower your dog's body temperature:

1. Put them on a cold floor or wet towel.
2. Slowly pour cool water (not icy cold) on their body. Avoid doing this near their head to prevent them from inhaling it.
3. Give them a bowl of cool water.

Keep pouring water over your fur baby until their breathing returns to normal.



Note: Avoid cuddling or wrapping your dog with a wet towel.

Step #3: Rush to the vet

Do this if the nearest clinic's only 5 minutes away.


And also, if your dog:

- Is unconscious.
- Has a body temperature over 104°F (40°C).

It's best if you can ask someone to accompany you during the trip.

They could drive or help cool down your 4-legged friend.

So bring ice packs and chill water with you.

 **Note:** Keep your car's air conditioning high while traveling. Or open the windows for ventilation.

Step #4: Continue cooling your dog down

But if the vet's too far...

Keep regulating your furry pal's temperature at home.

Aside from pouring cool water, you can try more aggressive methods to save your dog:

- Point a fan toward them.
- Open all the windows in the area.
- Use a garden hose to spray cool water on them.
- Put cold compress or frozen peas between their thighs.

Step #5: Monitor your dog every 5 minutes

Keep doing step #4.

But stop once your furry friend maintains a temperature below 104°F (40°C).

As lower than 101-102.5°F (38.3-39.2°C) is dangerous too.

Step #6: Check their breathing

Besides your dog's temperature, also check their breathing and pulse.

How to measure a dog's body temperature?

Rectal method

1. Get another person to hold your dog still. Or make your fur baby lay down on their side.

2. Apply water-based lubricant or petroleum jelly on the thermometer's tip.
3. Raise your dog's tail.
4. Gently insert the thermometer tip into their rectum by 1 inch (2.5 cm).
5. Hold it still as you wait for it to beep.
6. Once it does, lightly pull it out.
7. Wipe the thermometer tip with a tissue.
8. Read the results on the screen. (Look at the red line if it's a glass type.)
9. Sterilize it



Note: Most dogs get jittery during the process. So speak to your fur baby in a calm voice. And stroke them gently.

Ear method

Rectal thermometer's more accurate than this.

But this still works if it's the only one available at home.

1. Get an ear thermometer.
2. Read the instructions to calibrate it.
3. Hold your dog's head.
4. Pet them lightly to make them comfortable.
5. Lift one of their ears.
6. Insert the thermometer tip into your dog's ear canal.
7. Hold it at a 90° angle to their head.
8. Wait for 1-2 minutes until beeps.
9. Read the temperature on the display.

For precaution

- Never leave your dog in a parked car.
- Avoid overexercising them in hot weather.
- Always give them shade and water when outside.

- Watch them closely during strolls and take short breaks.
- Take them out for walks and play during cooler times of the day.

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