

Dog Is Chewing and Swallowing Toys

Chewed up playthings can turn into emergency vet visits for your dog.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a 1-year-old Cocker Spaniel. He loves playing with plush toys. The only problem is he eventually tears his plush toys apart and takes the stuffing out. He sleeps with these toys. Is there a safe plush toy he can have that will outlast his chewing and not be destroyed? He has also destroyed a vinyl cowboy boot five seconds after giving it to him. Your advice would be greatly appreciated.

A. I am concerned that your dog is headed for the surgery table at the nearest emergency clinic. We have surgically removed a remarkable variety of toys and objects from dogs' stomachs, including light bulbs, superballs, batteries, remote controls, socks, thong underwear, food wrappers, foam packing, feminine hygiene products, Christmas ornaments, rawhide chews, pieces of toys.

Objects like vinyl cowboy boots do not pass easily through a dog's digestive system.

In other words, very few objects are safe for your dog to chew on. I would recommend restricting chew toys to hard rubber toys, and to observe your dog carefully when he chews on them to make sure he is not actually swallowing any part of them. Other items, such as rawhide chews have been given safely to many dogs, but you still must observe your dog when he is chewing on them to make sure he thoroughly chews them up before swallowing them.

If your dog starts vomiting, check carefully for any missing clothing, toys or other items, and take him to your veterinarian if he continues to throw up. Vomiting is the No. 1 sign of a stomach or intestinal obstruction.

Jon Geller, DVM