

Give Dog a Few Weeks to Pass Sock

Dogs can often eat small pieces of fabric without serious harm.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. My Jack Russell Terrier ate a sock. He eats stuff all the time and either throws it up or passes it. We try to be vigilant and keep things out of his reach, but this one got by us. It has been a week and still no sock. He appears to be fine and doesn't seem to be having any problems. Should I have my vet X-ray him? My dad wants to dose him with mineral oil.

A. OK, so your Jack Russell ate a sock. No need to panic – yet.

If you had come into our emergency clinic right away, we would have injected some apomorphine and gotten him to vomit it up. Now that the sock is meandering through your dog's digestive system, I recommend a strategy of wait and watch closely. Some dogs can eat a sock or a piece of cloth, and it may live happily in their stomach for months. When they start vomiting and going off food, it's time to investigate with some X-rays. Unfortunately, X-rays often don't show soft objects like clothing, so it may require surgical exploration to find it.

Many dogs eat socks, plastic toys, batteries, remote controls, bottle caps, and towels, and the items pass through their intestines, only to appear as a deposit on the lawn.

Monitor your dog carefully for the next few weeks, especially his stool. If he starts vomiting, appears lethargic, or otherwise seems off, have some X-rays taken. If he somehow produces the sock in the stool, celebrate the passage and savings of several thousand dollars of surgery costs.