

Cicadas Not Harmful to Dogs, Vet Says

Dog owners do not need to worry if their dogs snack on cicadas.

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Many dog owners may be wondering if it is safe for their pet to snack on cicadas, since billions of periodical cicadas are emerging from the ground across Northern Illinois and neighboring states.

If dogs decide to make a snack of cicadas, owners do not need to worry, says Shelly Rubin, DVM, a Chicago veterinarian and American Veterinary Medical Association member. She has been researching cicadas in anticipation of this year's invasion and the subsequent onslaught of questions from concerned clients.

"Pet owners have nothing to worry about," Rubin says. "While they might be a nuisance to humans, they're no danger to us or our pets. They don't sting, they don't bite, they don't carry disease, and they can be eaten without any problem at all."

Cicadas are a good source of protein and are eaten as part of a human diet in some places of the world, Rubin says. Dog owners may want to monitor their pets while they're outside to ensure that they don't overindulge in a cicada meal. However, the sheer number of bugs in some places will make it impossible to prevent a dog from eating a few, she says.

If you catch your dog in the act of eating a cicada, do not remove it from his mouth, Rubin says. You may get your fingers bitten.

As with any food, eating too much may lead to vomiting or internal distress. If your dog appears to be in pain or vomits repeatedly, contact his veterinarian.