

The dangers of cheap and chewable dog toys

PoochesHQ

Working with dogs and having many different pooches come and go from my home all the time, I am always aware of keeping my place as [dog proof](#) as possible. This includes putting any items that can turn into chewable dog toys out of harms way, and also ensuring any toys left out for play are made of safe and good quality materials.

Particularly, when you have a dog like Darcy who can rip the squeaker out of a soft toy quicker than you can say 'hey' and big boisterous regulars like Big Ronnie the labrador and London the American Staffy who can turn a small ball or chewable dog toys into a pile of mash with one bite.

I must admit though that whilst the pooches toy box includes an array of interactive [Aussie Dog products](#) and other sturdy dog toys to help keep them mentally and physically stimulated (and are designed to pass the Ronnie and London bite test), one spiky, flashing rubber ball managed to retain its presence in the household despite my knowing it was not made of a safe or strong rubber.

Of course, the flash and squeak 'died' within a couple of days, but Darcy just adored chasing it round the house and took great pleasure in the fact it was small enough for him to get his mouth around to carry back to me for as long as he possibly could.

Whenever bigger dogs would come stay though I was always keeping an eye out for where that ball was, both because of it's size and how easily it could be swallowed by the bigger boys, and also because Darcy could get a bit too possessive of it and we'd have a bit of a [resource guarding](#) issue arise from time to time.

So you can imagine my panic last week when I realised Darcy no longer had the ball in his bed with him where I last saw it, and Rufus who was in our care was no where to be seen. To make matters worse I knew Rufus was a 'chewer' having only recently recovered from having a stomach operation to remove a sock he had eaten (one of his favourite pass times apparently!!).

Rushing around the house there I found him laying on the bed, happily chewing away on that spikey blue ball. To my horror, also laying in a pile under his chin were the pieces from inside the ball that had once made the squeaky noise, as well as the metal conduit and shiny, tiny lithium battery that had once caused the ball to flash.

The dread really kicked in at this point as I picked up all the pieces and began putting them back together bit by bit to see how much, if any, was missing.

Lady luck was on my side (this time!) as I managed to piece it all together and determine that there had only been one battery in the ball and that, along with the metal conduit and plastic insides, all seemed to be there.

What a stark warning it was that a toy like this has NO place in a home with dogs and that these cheaply made and dangerous toys are never to be used as dog toys, no matter how much they love them.

This whole experience rammed home the fact that any [dog toys](#) should be made out of strong, non-toxic materials and of a size they can't swallow. I'd go as far to say that dogs should never even be left alone playing with a soft toy that contains a plastic squeaker inside, as we all know how dogs just love to rip these out and chew them up.

Fortunately there are [plenty of suitable toys](#) on the market these days. They might initially cost more than the cheap China imports, but when you think about how much longer they last and the potential [financial and health cost](#) to you and your dog and to you should something go wrong with the cheap alternative, then there's no comparison.

Darcy now has his [Aussie Dog buddy ball](#) to chew and chase to his heart's content, and I can rest easy knowing he and the other dogs can play safely with no risk of swallowing anything dangerous hidden inside!

To find out more about treating destructive chewing [read here](#), or [read here](#) to learn about what can go wrong when dogs chew and swallow items. My article on how to [puppy proof your home](#) may also help you to be prepared for dogs that like to chew on things as well.

About the Author: Lara Shannon is co-Host of Pooches at Play and has completed a Certificate III in Dog Behaviour & Training with the National Dog Trainers Federation. Lara also runs her own dog walking, dog minding and dog training business in Melbourne's Bayside area.