

# Why Does My Dog Eat My Underwear?

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There are a few reasons why your dog is eating your underwear, including curiosity and attraction to the smell, but also boredom, anxiety, or health concerns. It might seem harmless, but this behavior is dangerous because eating clothing, such as socks and underwear, can cause a serious gastrointestinal obstruction. Learn why your dog is eating your underwear and how to stop it to keep your pup (and your underwear drawer) safe.

## Why Does My Dog Eat My Underwear?

Your dog could be eating your underwear for a variety of reasons—some harmless and others a cause for concern. Some of the reasons your dog is eating your underwear include:

- Curiosity and attraction to smell
- Boredom
- [Resource guarding](#): Some dogs ingest underwear because they deem it valuable and want to keep it from others
- Teething (puppies)
- Anxiety
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Medical condition or nutritional deficiency<sup>1</sup>

Dogs explore the world with their noses. A [highly evolved olfactory system](#) allows dogs to smell far better than any human ever could. When they come across an item that smells strongly of a family member, they are drawn to it. Even clean underwear can have lingering human smells that dogs can detect.

Dogs often greet humans with a nose to the crotch. Humans have active sweat glands in that region which produce pheromones and other scents. Dogs can learn a lot about a person by smelling them. The same rationale applies to your underwear.

Once your dog has discovered a pair of underwear, he may lick and chew the fabric to explore it or play with it. As unappealing as it sounds, the dog may enjoy the smell and taste. Some dogs simply chew the underwear, but others will actually ingest it.

## The Problem With Dogs Eating Underwear

Besides the obvious gross-out factor and the loss of your skivvies, eating underwear can cause serious health issues for dogs. Fabric cannot be digested in the stomach; the body will try to expel it or pass it. Your dog may vomit up all or part of underwear completely.

### GI Obstruction

There is a risk, however, of the underwear becoming trapped in the gastrointestinal tract, causing an [obstruction](#). This is a serious condition that requires immediate veterinary attention.<sup>2</sup>

Possible initial signs of a GI obstruction include [vomiting](#), [diarrhea](#), loss of appetite, and [lethargy](#). The abdomen may become painful and/or bloated. If you notice these signs and you suspect your dog might have eaten something non-edible, bring your dog to the nearest open veterinarian immediately. A GI obstruction may be discovered via radiographs or ultrasound. If so, the foreign body will need to be removed. If the foreign body is in the stomach, it may be possible to remove it with endoscopy. Blockages in the intestines require abdominal surgery.

Contact your vet if you notice your dog trying to eat your underwear or any other inappropriate items. It's important to rule out a medical or nutritional causes before attempting to correct the behavior. If you know your dog has recently ingested a pair of underwear, your vet may be able to give them a medication to make them vomit them up.

## How To Stop Dogs From Eating Underwear

If there is no medical reason why your dog is eating your underwear, it can be a fairly easy problem to fix just by making a few small adjustments.

### Keep It Out of Reach

The best way to keep your dog from eating your underwear is to keep clothing out of reach of your dog. Keep dirty laundry in a closed hamper or bin. Put clean laundry away in drawers and closets before your dog can steal them from the laundry basket.

### Reduce Boredom

Take steps to enrich your dog's environment and [reduce boredom](#). Spend time exercising and bonding with your dog. Consider interactive dog toys, tasty [dog chews](#), and even [dog sports](#) to occupy his busy mind and body. Go on long [walks](#), allowing him to sniff around [thoroughly](#). Change your route regularly to offer new smells, sights, and sounds.

### Training

Training can also help you get your dog's underwear-eating habit under control. Work on cues, such as "[drop it](#)" and "[leave it](#)," so you can stop your dog at the moment you catch him trying to eat something they shouldn't. Always use [positive reinforcement](#) rather than punishment. Redirect your dog to a toy or game. Reward him for diverting his attention from the underwear (or other "bad" item) and back to you with a treat or praise. Besides making your dog a better listener, you'll increase your bond, too.