

# Is Rawhide Bad for Dogs?

*Petco*

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Many responsible pet parents are now thinking twice before giving rawhide bones to their dogs. But dogs still love—and need—to chew, so what alternatives can you give your dog instead of traditional rawhide chews? Luckily, there are many wholesome and satisfying traditional rawhide alternatives you can feel good about giving your dog. Whether you seek [highly-digestible rawhide bones](#) formulated to be gentle on digestion or a [non-rawhide treat](#), Petco is proud to offer a range of dog chews that are designed to be better for your dog than traditional rawhide bones.

## Is rawhide bad for dogs?

Yes, traditional rawhide is bad for dogs. The tough texture of rawhide bones may be fun for your dog to chew, but they can break into sharp shards and splinters that can damage your pup's mouth, throat and stomach. A traditional rawhide bone isn't meant to be digested, and these pieces can harm your pet's insides.

Luckily, there are alternatives. Highly digestible rawhide has a very similar texture and taste, but is designed to prevent splintering and breaks down easier when swallowed. Or, you can choose rawhide-free chews that simulate the toughness of dried animal hide and are even more digestible and wholesome.

## Can puppies have rawhide?

No. Rawhide can be risky for dogs, but even more so for the delicate, developing bodies of puppies. Even gnawing on a rawhide bone can damage your pup's tiny mouth and sensitive gums. Some of the more questionable ingredients in traditional rawhide negatively affect puppies more than dogs, too. Teething toys designed for smaller canine mouths are a preferable alternative.

## Alternatives to traditional rawhide

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## What is rawhide?

Rawhide bones are made from the skins of animals —usually cows. During leather manufacturing,

the outer skin of an animal is used to create leather, while the inner layer of skin may be turned into rawhide bones for dogs.

In traditional rawhide bones, this inner portion of animal hide goes through a series of chemical processes, including cleaning treatments and separating and preserving the skin. In the end, the chemically treated animal skin is cut into smaller pieces, formed into the desired shapes and sometimes covered with coloring or flavoring agents.

By the time rawhide chews get to dogs, they can sometimes bear little resemblance to the animal hides from which they came. This difference is not necessarily a bad thing on its own—after all, wholesome dog biscuits made from nutritious ingredients can look very different from the raw materials from which they are made. However, many of the treatments used to turn animal hides into rawhide dog chews involve potentially dangerous chemicals, and some of these chews are made outside the U.S.A., where there is much less dog food safety regulation.

## Is rawhide digestible for dogs?

Traditional rawhide dog chews can sometimes be difficult for dogs to digest. Rawhide bones are made from highly processed, tough animal hides. Though the base material—the inner layer of an animal hide—is natural, it undergoes a series of chemical treatments to help make it durable, much as the outer layer of that same hide does to become a sturdy pair of leather boots.

While this chemically induced toughness is what gives rawhide bones their structure and keeps your dog occupied chewing on them for hours, it also can create health hazards.

As rawhide softens in your dog's mouth, it slowly becomes somewhat softer and more pliable. At this point, it can sometimes be bitten off and swallowed in chunks. Once swallowed, it is not easily broken down in your dog's stomach. This can possibly lead to painful and uncomfortable indigestion for your dog or even dangerous intestinal blockages. Instead of traditional rawhide bones, Petco recommends treats made from easily digestible ingredients that won't put your pup at risk and can be just as delicious.

## Why is rawhide bad for dogs?

There are several reasons why traditional rawhide bones for dogs aren't always the best choice. In fact, Petco no longer carries traditional rawhide products and instead stocks a wide variety of [dog treats and chews](#) that are as safe as they are exciting for your beloved pet.

No two dogs are exactly alike, and pups have different preferences based on their size, chewing style and favorite flavors. There are alternatives to rawhide bones for dogs of every kind to help satisfy your pup.

Rawhide chews present potential safety hazards for several reasons—from the way they're manufactured to the damage they can do inside a dog. Many pet parents are increasingly steering clear of rawhide bones for dogs based on several factors:

- **Ingredients** Traditional rawhide chews are often manufactured with strong chemicals, preservatives and bleaching agents. This means that your dog could be ingesting harsh chemicals that might make them sick. Additionally, since rawhide chews are made of animal

skin, there's a possibility of bacterial contamination. Many traditional rawhide products are manufactured outside the U.S.A. and thus may not be subject to the same high food safety standards.

- **Choking risk** Traditional rawhide dog chews are tough and dense. If your dog bites off a chunk and accidentally inhales it, the piece might get caught in their airway.
- **Indigestion** Because rawhide dog bones can harbor bacterial or chemical contamination and dogs can't adequately digest chunks of rawhide, your dog might experience gastrointestinal issues such as vomiting or diarrhea after ingesting rawhide.
- **Blockage** A too-big chunk of rawhide bone swallowed by your dog could potentially cause a serious blockage in their stomach or intestines. If left untreated, blockages can be fatal. Surgery is sometimes necessary to remove a piece of rawhide stuck in a dog's stomach or intestines.

While traditional rawhide for dogs may pose risks, there are safe and tasty alternatives. If your dog loves the satisfaction of a good rawhide chew, you can check out Petco's extensive collection of [dog treats and chews](#) to find the right rawhide bone alternative for your pup. Highly digestible rawhide bones are specially formulated to be safer for dogs, meaning you don't have to give up on rawhide bones entirely. There are also options like [jerky](#), [cow ears](#) and [dental bones](#) to help give your dog the satisfaction of extended chew sessions.

## What age can puppies have rawhide?

Puppies should never be given rawhide treats until they are at least 6 months old. Puppies have more delicate teeth compared to adult dogs, which means that chewing on hard objects can lead to teeth breaking. In addition, young puppies have narrower digestive tracts than their adult counterparts, which increases the risk of choking or blockages for puppies who are given rawhide chews.

Even after your pup reached the 6-month mark, traditional rawhide for dogs isn't an ideal choice. Instead, try giving your growing dog a highly digestible rawhide treat. These types of chews are made without dangerous artificial ingredients and are formulated to break down much more easily than traditional rawhide bones, helping to make them easier—and safer—to digest.

## Can I give my dog rawhide every day?

There are many alternative treats preferable to traditional rawhide for dogs. Your dog shouldn't have to risk chemical and bacterial contamination, gastrointestinal blockages to enjoy a good chew session. If your dog loves the experience of a rawhide chew, you can substitute highly digestible rawhide products, which are manufactured to have safety in mind and to be more easily digested. You can also try treats that give your dog a similar sensation to chewing on a dense rawhide bone, such as rawhide-free jerkies and bully sticks.

How often your dog can have chewy treats depends on a few factors, including your dog's age, size and chewing style, as well as the type of chew provided. Monitor your dog for signs of digestive discomfort and make sure they're not biting off overly large chunks. In general, it can be suitable for dogs to have something firm to gnaw on, as it cleans their teeth and keeps them occupied for an hour or two every day. Just make sure your dog has a chewing treat that's appropriate for them.

# How many rawhides can my dog have in a week?

Different dogs have different chewing styles and go through bones at different rates. Big dogs with strong bites might destroy a highly digestible rawhide chew in a matter of hours, while small dogs and less aggressive chewers can nibble at the same chew for days. The size, shape, style and ingredients of chewy bones also affect how long they last. Therefore, the number of rawhide bones a dog can have in a week is variable. A veterinarian who is familiar with your dog can make a specific recommendation regarding how many rawhides would be safe for them based on their health and habits.

Stick to highly digestible rawhide treats and other rawhide bone alternatives and remember that [dog biscuits and treats](#) or chews should not be taking the place of nutritious [dog food](#)—keep treats to no more than 10% of your pup's daily calories. If you follow these guidelines, you'll find a happy medium where your dog gets plenty of satisfying, delicious chew time without experiencing tummy troubles.

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