

FDA Warning: Store-Bought 'Bone Treats' Could Kill Your Dog

November 28, 2017 — The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) has issued a warning regarding the purchase and use of store-bought “bone treats”. The FDA claims the danger goes beyond the risk of regular bones.

What's a 'Bone Treat'?

The FDA reports it has received about 68 reports of pet illnesses related to “bone treats”.

Bone treats differ from regular uncooked butcher-type bones because they're processed and packaged for sale as “dog treats”.

Which Products?

A variety of commercially-available bone treats for dogs were listed in the reports including items described as:

- “Ham Bones”
- “Pork Femur Bones”
- “Rib Bones”
- “Smokey Knuckle Bones”

No specific brands are mentioned in the FDA bulletin.

The processed products may be dried through a smoking process or by baking. They may also contain other ingredients such as:

- Preservatives
- Seasonings
- Smoke flavorings

According to Dr. Carmela Stamper, a veterinarian in the Center for Veterinary Medicine at the FDA...

“Giving your dog a bone treat might lead to an unexpected trip to your veterinarian, a possible emergency surgery, or even death for your pet.”

So, if you're planning to give your dog a stocking full of bone treats this holiday season, you may want to reconsider.



Illnesses Reported

Illnesses reported to FDA by owners and veterinarians in dogs that have eaten bone treats have included:

- Gastrointestinal obstruction (blockage in the digestive tract)
- Choking
- Cuts and wounds in the mouth or on the tonsils
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bleeding from the rectum
- Death

According to FDA, approximately 15 dogs have reportedly died after eating a bone treat.

How Widespread Is the Problem?

To date, reports submitted by pet owners and veterinarians have included about 90 dogs. Some reports included more than one dog.

In addition, FDA has received 7 reports of product problems such as...

- Moldy-appearing bones or Treats splintering when chewed by the pet

How to Keep Your Dog Safe

FDA has included the following tips to help keep your dog safe:

1. Chicken bones and other bones from the kitchen table can cause injury when chewed by pets, too. So be careful to keep platters out of reach when you're cooking or the family is eating.
2. Be careful what you put in the trash can. Dogs are notorious for helping themselves to the turkey carcass or steak bones disposed of there.
3. Talk with your veterinarian about other toys or treats that are most appropriate for your dog. There are many available products made with different materials for dogs to chew on.

What to Do?

Dr. Stamper adds the following advice...

“We recommend supervising your dog with any chew toy or treat, especially one she hasn't had before. And if she 'just isn't acting right,' call your veterinarian right away!”

U.S. citizens can report complaints about FDA-regulated pet food products by calling the [consumer complaint coordinator](#) in your area.

Or go to <http://www.fda.gov/petfoodcomplaints>.