



# FOREIGN BODIES

"Foreign Bodies" are typically objects your pet has ingested which may become trapped and cause intestinal obstructions. Any of these warning signs could be caused by a foreign body:

## Foreign Body Signs and Symptoms



- Vomiting
- Anorexia
- Diarrhea (with or without blood)
- Restlessness
- Abdominal pain

## Commonly Found Foreign Bodies

- Balls and Chew Toys
- Bones
- Bras
- Bread dough (yeast)
- Corn cobs
- Fishing hooks (sometimes with a fish and line attached)
- Hair ties and ribbons
- Pantyhose
- Rocks
- Socks
- Sticks
- Strings and ribbons (sometimes with needle attached - especially in cats)
- Tampons
- Underwear



Food preparation items with food remnants are particularly tempting:

- Shish kabob skewers
- Candy wrappers
- Bottle caps
- Plastic or tinfoil food wrap
- Utensils (plastic and metal)
- Plastic bag ties



## Seek Treatment Immediately

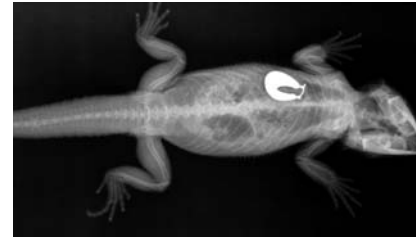
Waiting on this type of emergency only makes the situation worse by possibly causing the following:

- Blocked intestine: this can become necrotic, potentially causing your pet to go into shock and possibly die
- Dehydration: intestinal obstruction, vomiting and diarrhea can cause significant metabolic changes within the body
- Perforation of the intestinal or thoracic wall: this can cause abdominal or generalized infection, which can lead to death.
- Poisoning: many foreign bodies are made of materials that are potentially toxic when absorbed. Lead and zinc are good examples that when consumed may lead to profound systemic disease if enough is absorbed.

## Treatment

Surgical intervention is not always required with gastrointestinal foreign bodies. Occasionally, the item ingested is small and smooth enough to pass through the gastrointestinal tract without causing damage or becoming lodged.

Additionally, some foreign bodies may become lodged in the upper gastrointestinal tract (mouth, esophagus, and stomach) and may be removed with the use of a flexible endoscope.



Frequently, though, conservative management and endoscopy fail to provide relief and surgical removal is warranted.

## Preventive Action

Often times foreign body intestinal problems can be avoided:

- Keep items that dogs and cats like to chew and swallow picked up and out of reach from your pet. This includes everything on the above list, plus other items that your personal pet may enjoy a little too much.
- Involve children in "puppy proofing or kitty proofing your home". This will help to teach children the importance of taking care of their pet and their personal belongings. If they don't want Fido to chew up their favorite video game then keep it picked up where Fido can't get to it.
- Purchase appropriately sized toys for your pet. Don't let the Labrador Retriever play with the same size ball as the Yorkshire Terrier.
- Always throw away stuffing and small bits of material, squeakers and rubber parts ripped from toys. If a toy is damaged, get rid of it.



## Additional Do's and Don'ts

- Never pull string from your pet's mouth or rectum - it may do more damage to your pet (string can cut like a knife when stretched against internal organs and tissues).
- If you suspect your pet has an intestinal foreign body, *contact your veterinarian immediately for further tests*. If you have just witnessed your pet eating something it shouldn't have - do not automatically make your pet vomit! Call your veterinarian or veterinary emergency center and let them know what was ingested. Some items will cause more damage coming back up than they did going down!

