
Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin, Inc.

About Rawhides

GRRoW Hotline: 888-655-4753



Rawhides have been considered safe for dogs until recently.

On a nutritional note rawhide products have no nutritional value at all. They are loaded with artificial coloring and preservatives that can cause severe allergic reactions in some dogs. It is not uncommon to see dogs develop rashes and irritation on the inside of their lips from continuous exposure of the chemicals from chewing. Rawhides are indigestible and can be contaminated with harmful bacteria.

Rawhides are supposedly made of digestible animal products. The truth is that they are digested quite slowly and if consumed rapidly, can cause vomiting and/or diarrhea from the many pieces still sitting undigested in the GI tract. If a rawhide is swallowed whole or in large chunks, there are additional dangers. Rawhide chews can lodge in the throat and cause choking, or a large piece may be swallowed, scraping and irritating the throat and esophagus on the way down. Once in the stomach or intestinal tract, a large piece of rawhide can also create a physical obstruction.

An additional danger that is less widely known is the practice, in some countries, of using an arsenic-based preservative in the processing of rawhide toys. There has also been a recent FDA alert about the risk of Salmonella associated with dog chew products made from pork or beef-derived materials: refer to <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/NEW00692.html> or call 1-888-INFO-FDA. Since rawhide is not regulated in any way, these foreign hides may also contain other detrimental things such as antibiotics, lead, or insecticides that could adversely affect the health of dogs.

There are also wonderful alternatives to rawhide. Pet supply stores are everywhere, and carry many diverse alternatives including vegetable and meat-flavored bones made from potato starch, bones made from extremely strong rubber infused with flavorings, and corn-starch based bones also infused with flavor. All of these but the rubber ones break apart into tiny pieces while being chewed. Once they are chewed down to a small piece that your dog could swallow, discard it. All of these bones except for the rubber-based ones are easily digestible.

Offer your dog a variety of chewing alternatives and choose them responsibly. Your pet may thank you by forgetting about your furniture and your slippers...and your favorite chair...and the toilet paper roll...