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**CHEW ON THIS! YOUR GUIDE TO BONES, CHEWS and TOYS for your DOG**

Many dogs love to chew! It’s stimulating and fun and as pet owners we want to provide our beloved dogs with entertainment and joy. The question is: which toys, treats and bones are best for you dog?

Here’s an overview that should help you pick products that are considered safer for your dog. Although your dog might fancy anything you buy for him, any veterinary dentist or veterinary surgeon can testify that some products are more apt to cause dental disease and GI distress and obstruction. Note no chew is totally risk-free but why not choose safer products when given the option?

**GOOD CHOICES: TOYS**

\* Goughnuts are made of vulcanized rubber and great for vigorous chewers. [www.goughnuts.com](http://www.goughnuts.com). Key features: Durable, Floatable, Cleanable, Chewable, Recyclable.

\* KONGS are another great rubber product designed for enthusiastic chewers. [www.kongcompany.com](http://www.kongcompany.com). KONGs can also be stuffed with foods and frozen treats. See their website for recipes. The website also has guides for which KONG fits your dog’s age and chewing interests. For example, black KONGs can be chosen for their extra durability for aggressive chewers.

\* West Paw Design makes chew and play toys from Zygoflex: a tough, buoyant, pliable, BPA and phthalate-free, Non-toxic and FDA compliant material. [www.westpawdesign.com](http://www.westpawdesign.com) Chew toys include: Tux, Jive Balls and Hurleys.

\* We recommend a good ole orange road hockey ball over a tennis ball for ball play time. This is because the fuzzy portion of tennis balls is notoriously good at wearing teeth and causing dental disease.

\* Rope toys made from nylon are preferred over cotton rope toys because the cotton fibers can sometimes fray and become entangled between or encircled around the dog's incisor teeth which may result in focal tissue damage.

**EDIBLE CHEWS & BONES**

Some important questions when picking out bones and edible chews are: 1) Is the item likely to damage my dog’s teeth? 2) Could the chew be a choking hazard? Is it apt to cause GI obstruction? Will it cause GI irritation or pancreatitis?

Veterinary dentists are intimately familiar with the dental damage they see related to hard chews. Teeth can develop micro-fractures over years of minor chewing and then these micro-fractures accumulate and coalesce, triggering major structural failures. There are similar issues in people: you may have heard of a person who broke a tooth chewing something soft like a cookie. This is because the simple hydraulic forces were enough to cause damage on an already structurally compromised tooth.   
  
Veterinary Dentists created something called, “the Kneecap Rule”:

“If you would not want me to hit you or your dog in the knee cap with it, don't let your dog chew on it”.

This basically translates to, if it doesn't bend, don't feed it. **Avoid really hard chews such as natural and nylon bones, bully sticks, deer antlers, large rawhide bones and dried cow hooves.**  Safer options for include rawhide strips or the aforementioned chew toys.

When choosing products for your dog to chew, your best bet is to pick ones appropriate for your sized pet and take away any smaller pieces that may constitute a choking hazard or a GI obstruction if your dog pulverizes it into smaller parts.

In general if your dog is annihilating toys, it’s best to shop around for something more durable. Unfortunately there is no universal safe toy for every dog. All you can do as a pet owner is pick wisely for the beginning and monitor your dog with its new toy thereafter.

***Which products actually help with dental health?***

The Oral Veterinary Health Council (VOHC) is an organization of board certified Veterinary Dentists that reviews products intended to help retard plaque and tartar on the teeth of animals. Each product is evaluated against a pre-set, strict batch of standards and products meeting the criteria outlined by the VOHC earn the VOHC Seal of Approval. Visit [www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org) for more information. The following products have been awarded the VOHC Registered Seal.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Product as Marketed** | **Type of Product** | **Claim** | **Company** | **Species** | **Sold Where?** | **Year Seal**  **Awarded** |
| [**Prescription Diet® Canine t/d®: Original Bites**](http://www.hillspet.com/products/pd-canine-td-canine-dental-health-dry.html) | **Diet** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **Hill’s Pet Nutrition Inc.** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **1998** |
| [**Prescription Diet® Canine t/d®: Small Bites**](http://www.hillspet.com/products/pd-canine-td-canine-dental-health-small-bites-dry.html) | **Diet** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **Hill’s Pet Nutrition Inc.** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **1998** |
| **Friskies® Cheweez® Beefhide Treats** | **Rawhide Chew Treat** | **Tartar** | **Friskies Petcare Co.** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2001** |
| [**Science Diet® Oral Care for Dogs**](http://www.hillspet.com/products/sd-canine-adult-oral-care-dry.html) | **Diet** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **Hill’s Pet Nutrition Inc.** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2001** |
| **Iams® Chunk Dental Defense Diet for Dogs** | **Diet** | **Tartar** | **Iams Company** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2003** |
| **Eukanuba® Adult Maintenance Diet for Dogs** | **Diet** | **Tartar** | **Iams Company** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2003** |
| [**Purina Veterinary Diets® DH Dental Health® brand Canine Formula**](http://www.purinaveterinarydiets.com/Product/DHDentalHealthDogFood.aspx) | **Diet** | **Tartar** | **Nestle Purina PetCare** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2006** |
| [**Purina Veterinary Diets® DH Dental Health® brand Small Bites Canine Formula**](http://www.purinaveterinarydiets.com/Product/DHDentalHealthDogFood.aspx) | **Diet** | **Tartar** | **Nestle Purina PetCare** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2006** |
| [**Purina Veterinary Diets® Dental Chewz**™ **brand Dog Treats**](http://www.purinaveterinarydiets.com/Product/DentalChewzDogTreats.aspx) | **Rawhide Chew Treat** | **Tartar** | **Nestle Purina PetCare** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2006** |
| **Canine Greenies** **®** **- all sizes** | **Edible Treat** | **Plaque &Tartar** | **The Nutro/Greenies Company** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2007** |
| [**Tartar Shield Soft Rawhide Chews for Dogs**](http://tartarshield.com/) | [**Edible Treat**](http://www.vohc.org/accepted_products.htm#tartarshield) | **Tartar** | **Therametric Technologies, Inc.** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2007** |
| **Canine Greenies ® Weight Management - all sizes** | **Edible Treat** | **Plaque &Tartar** | **The Nutro/Greenies Company** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2008** |
| **Canine Greenies ® Senior - all sizes** | **Edible Treat** | **Plaque &Tartar** | **The Nutro/Greenies Company** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2008** |
| [**HealthiDent®**](http://healthidentstreats.com/)**,** [**Bright Bites**](http://brightbites.com/) **and** [**Checkups**](http://checkupstreats.com/) **Chews for Dogs - all sizes** | **Edible Treat** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **Sugar Creek Pet Products, Diamond Foods, Inc.** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2008** |
| **Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ anti-plaque water additive** | **Water additive** | **Plaque** | **HealthyMouth LLC.** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2008** |
| **Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ anti-plaque gel** | **Oral gel** | **Plaque** | **HealthyMouth LLC.** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2011** |
| **Greenies® Veterinary Formula Canine Dental Chews** | **Edible Treat** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **The Nutro/Greenies Company** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2011** |
| **Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ anti-plaque oral spray** | **Oral spray** | **Plaque** | **HealthyMouth LLC.** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2011** |
| **Petsmile by Supersmile toothpaste** | [**Toothpaste**](http://www.vohc.org/accepted_products.htm#petsmile) | **Plaque** | **Robell Research Inc, dba Supersmile** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **To be launched in 2013** |
| **SANOS Dental Sealant** | **Dental Sealant** | **Plaque & Tartar** | **AllAccem, Inc.** | **Dog** | **Veterinarian** | **2011** |
| **Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ anti-plaque water additive - Mobility Formulation** | **Water additive** | **Plaque** | **HealthyMouth LLC.** | **Dog** | **Consumer & Veterinarian** | **2011** |
| **ADA-compliant soft-bristle, flat head toothbrush** | [**Toothbrush**](http://www.vohc.org/accepted_products.htm#brush) | **Plaque & Tartar** | **Various - look for the ADA Seal** | **Dog** | **Consumer** | **2012** |