

Bone treats a dangerous stocking stuffer for dogs

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(HealthDay)—Even if he's a good boy, don't put bone treats in your

dog's stocking this holiday season because they can pose a serious health risk to your pooch, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns.

The FDA said it has received reports of 68 pet illnesses and 15 deaths caused by bone treats. The reports included moldy-looking treats and bone treats that splintered when chewed by the dog.

Bone treats differ from uncooked butcher-type bones in that they are processed and packaged. They may be dried through smoking or baking, and they may contain ingredients such as preservatives, seasonings and smoke flavorings.

"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," Dr. Carmela Stamper, a veterinarian in the Center for Veterinary Medicine at the FDA, said in an agency news release.

Potential risks include blockage in the digestive tract, choking, cuts and wounds in the mouth or on the tonsils, vomiting, diarrhea, and bleeding from the rectum.

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

The FDA also reminded people with pets that regular bones—especially turkey or chicken bones, which are brittle—can be harmful and shouldn't be given to pets. It's also important to make sure that pets can't get at them in the garbage.

The bottom line? Talk with your veterinarian about toys or treats that would be best for your dog.

More information: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has more on [dog care](#).

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