

## Puppies Are Chewing Machines!

Puppies are chewing machines—they bite everything all the time! They need to chew constantly. To help them learn to chew on the right things and not the wrong things, you must provide them with new and interesting chew items every day, several times a day. Some things are not super interesting to pups unless we are playing with them. Stuffed toys, rubber toys, balls and other similar things don't tend to hold a pup's attention for very long without interaction.

**So what will hold a puppy's attention?** Edible chews are your best bet. Stuffed Kongs are my favorite because you can use your dog's regular food to stuff them, and they learn to mouth and chew and lick and generally work for their meals. Other options that work well for dogs include Yak chews, dental chews such as Greenies, bully sticks, non-rawhide chews, pig ears, hoofs, etc. Stuffed bones or meat bones may also be an option, but please talk with your veterinarian before giving these to your pup.



**With all chews, please supervise your dog closely** to make sure they are chewing and not biting off and swallowing chunks. When your pup starts to get near the end of a bully stick or other chew, be sure to trade it out for a new one so that they don't choke on the smaller pieces.

**What should you do if your pup starts to chew the wrong thing?** (Say the corner of your rug or the leg of your chair?) Interrupt them (yes, you can tell them “no”) but immediately follow up by giving your pup something super interesting. If they can't leave something alone after you've said no and redirected



them to a legal chew, then you will need to take further action. You can just move whatever they are chewing on out of reach (think of this as puppy proofing while they are growing up much the way you child proof for little kids). You can also use your confinement area with your pup when you can't constantly supervise. Both are good options and tend to be a better choice for both you and the puppy than continual nagging and scolding. Remember that puppies will outgrow the crazy chew everything stage—eventually.

**When will puppies outgrow that puppy chewing stage?** We usually see a really strong desire to chew starting between 12 and 14 weeks and lasting until all of the pup's adult teeth are in. Then the chewing subsides some, though we often see another big chewing phase at around 9 months and then again at 18 months. These are perfectly normal, so be prepared for the chewing to come back some. Then many dogs will continue to enjoy chewing throughout their lives, but not with quite the same fervor that they did as younger pups.