

# Can Dogs Eat Bones? The Ultimate Guide To What's Safe And What's Not

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“Give a dog a bone” — a common saying we've all heard, but in reality should you satisfy those pitiful eyes begging you for your leftover bone from dinner?

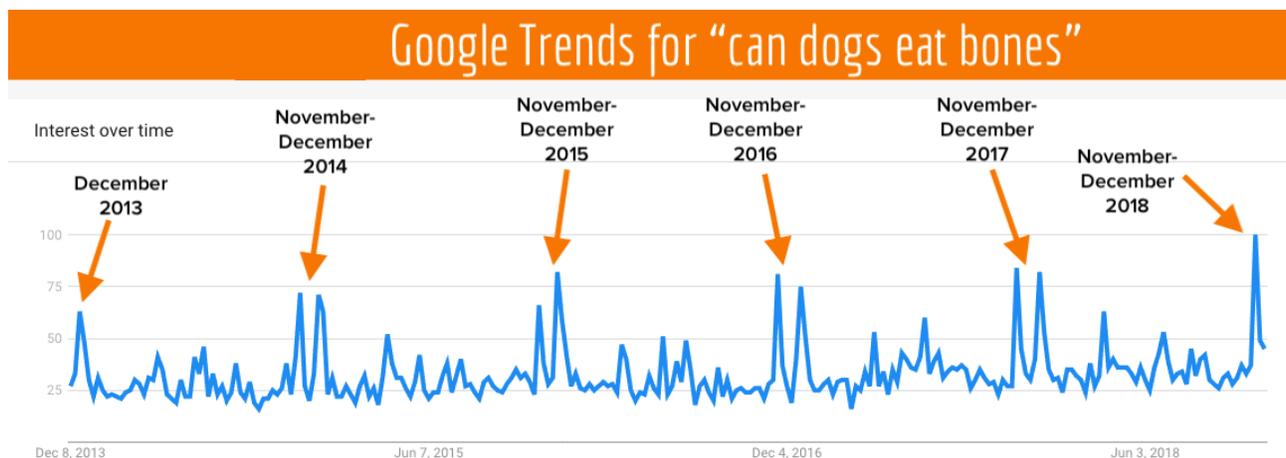
We all know dogs consider a bone a prized possession, but how do you know which bones are safe, and what do you do if your dog eats a bone that's not safe? What time of year are people most tempted to feed their dogs a bone and which states are most interested?

Find out all the answers to your questions and more in our comprehensive guide to safe bones for dogs.

## What Time Of Year Are People Most Likely To Feed Bones To Dogs?

Perhaps the answer here will not surprise you, but according to Google Trend data **for the past 5 years, internet searches for “can dogs eat bones” spikes each year at Thanksgiving and Christmas.**

Sure there are steady searches all year round but the holiday season seems to bring out the giving in all of us! Just make sure you are giving a treat that is safe for your pup before you hand it over.



# What Types Of Bones Can Dogs Eat? General Rules Of Thumb

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Although it depends on the type of animal bone, there are some general rules you should follow when considering giving your dog a bone.

- **Raw vs cooked:** Can dogs eat raw bones? Most experts agree that it's much safer to give your dog raw bones than cooked. Cooking causes bones to soften and increases the risk of bones splintering when chewed. Raw bones are also an excellent source of minerals and vitamins.
- **Bone size:** Opt for large, thick bones rather than small or narrow bones. Dogs are less likely to chew down large bones into shards and smaller pieces they can swallow.
- **Existing stomach problems:** If your dog suffers from stomach issues, irritable bowel, or frequent diarrhea, then it's a good idea to take all bones off the table. Bone marrow is extremely rich and can exacerbate these problems.

## Beef Bones

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One of the most frequent questions we see is, "can dogs eat beef rib bones?" **Yes, as long as they're large.** Beef bones are naturally harder than most other types of animal bones, making them more difficult for dogs to break down. Can dogs eat steak bones? The same rule applies as with rib bones.

Can dogs eat cooked beef bones? There's been some disagreement among experts in the past on this issue, but the consensus these days is that cooked beef bones are acceptable if they're large enough.

## Chicken Bones

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Can dogs eat cooked chicken bones (or raw, for that matter)? The consensus on chicken bones of any kind is a resounding **NO**. Why? Chicken bones, especially when cooked, easily break and splinter. This can cause your dog to choke from bones getting caught in his throat.

Even worse, the sharp, splintered bones can puncture your dog's gastrointestinal tract, which not only can cause extreme pain and infection but can also lead to death if not treated immediately.

## Turkey Bones

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Turkey bones splinter easily like chicken bones and are **not recommended raw or cooked.**

## Pork Bones

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Like chicken bones, experts typically agree that **pork bones aren't safe, whether they're cooked or raw**. This includes pork ribs, ham bones and pork chop bones. The adverse health effects can be the same as you'll see with chicken bones.

## Lamb Bones

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Lamb bones are more similar to beef bones in their density. So, **follow the same rules as beef bones. Raw is better but cooked is okay if it's large and thick**.

## What Do I Do If My Dog Eats A Bad Bone?

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We all try to be responsible pet parents, but pups can be sneaky and steal a bone off a plate or counter when you turn your back for a second. So, let's say your crafty canine ate cooked chicken bones. What do you do? Stay calm and follow these steps:

### Immediate Steps

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- If you catch your dog in the act, try to take away the bones before he gobbles them all down.
- Make sure he's not choking (see the video below for how to help a choking dog).
- Call your veterinarian to see if they have any immediate suggestions. Some vets recommend giving your dog a few pieces of white bread to help cushion his GI tract.<sup>1</sup> Every situation is different, however so be sure to call your vet asap.

## Watch Your Dog Closely

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Ingesting chicken bones doesn't necessarily lead to any problems, but it's crucial to keep a close eye on your dog for the next several days to make sure he's in the clear.

- If your dog exhibits any of these symptoms, go to your vet right away: vomiting, lethargy, abdominal bloating, not eating, constipation or straining to defecate, or bloody stool.
- Check your dog's stool for a few days to see if the bone fragments passed through.
- If you haven't seen the bones in his still within 3-4 days, see your vet to make sure the bones aren't stuck in your dog's GI tract.<sup>1</sup>

The injuries resulting from damage to a dog's intestinal tract could require expensive surgery. Pet insurance is an excellent way to protect yourself against the unexpected, helping you pay for sudden veterinary emergencies.

## How To Help A Choking Dog

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If your dog is choking on a bone (or anything else), be sure to watch this brief video that illustrated how to help him right away until you can get him to your vet.

## What Other Foods Should I Keep Away From My Dog?

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If you've been in the habit of feeding your dog table scraps or giving him "human food," stop what you're doing and read our article telling you what foods are toxic to dogs right away. You might be surprised at the number of foods dogs should never eat.