

## give a dog a bone? a healthy treat for our pets or an accident waiting to happen?

Cox St Vets – “We care for your pets at Cox St Vets”

Dogs and bones seem like a natural combination. They will spend hours upon hours chewing on a bone as if it is the ultimate purpose in life.

Bones can be useful in cleaning the teeth, reducing tartar and associated gum disease.

Feeding bones to dogs can provide numerous health benefits, but which bones should we be feeding, and which ones should be avoided?

There are a number of potential issues with raw bones, including splinters, choking, tooth damage and intestinal blockages. Overfeeding bones can also lead to constipation.

There are some basic rules which help make bone feeding as ‘safe’ as possible:

Only feed raw bones.

**Never** feed cooked bones - they can splinter and perforate the stomach, or cause blockages in the intestine. This includes smoked bones such as ham bones.

Soft bones are good choices.

Safe choices include lamb necks, flaps, shanks and chicken necks. Long marrow bones can cause tooth fractures.

Chicken necks are not as sharp as wings.

Provide bones after meal time, when they are less likely to be swallowed whole.

Choose an appropriate size of bone for your dog - make sure they cannot be swallowed whole.

Cats may be more likely to eat chicken bones which have been slightly warmed (**not** cooked through).

