



Toys are an important part of a puppy's development. Appropriate toys provide mental stimulation, an outlet for normal chewing drive, and provide a positive alternative to destructive chewing of personal property.

A stimulating variety of toys keeps the puppy occupied. Puppies, like children, become bored with the same toys; it is highly recommended that types of toys be rotated frequently. Puppies should have a number of toys to choose from at all times; not only does this help keep the pup engaged but also reduces the chance of him ultimately becoming protective of his toys.

Not all toys currently on the market are safe for the ages, sizes or breeds of puppies in our program. In addition, some toys and activities are counterproductive to developing a working guide. Remember, a guide must willingly work past common distractions such as balls, Frisbees or other toys encountered in everyday life.

Toys can be effective tools in reducing attention-seeking behaviors such as 'keep away'. Puppies pick up unacceptable items and 'parade' them to get raisers' attention; praising and admiring the pup that parades his toys will make him less likely to steal household items. A pup that brings his toys to the raiser is to be encouraged, but under no circumstances should raisers throw toys for a pup or participate in retrieve games.

Even the best toys experience normal wear and tear. Toys should be routinely checked for any damage, splintering or wear. Special attention should be paid to ensure the toy has not become worn to the point of becoming too small, thus posing a choking or ingesting hazard. Some dogs are voracious chewers and will destroy even the strongest, safest toys. Observe your puppy and use toys with caution with strong chewers.

In special circumstances, CFR's may recommend a food stuffed/kibble dispensing interactive toy. *Only the CFR may recommend food in a toy.*

The toys in the list below have been carefully researched by GDB staff; *these are the only toys that may be accessed by a program puppy.* Be sure to stay with the brand names listed below as not all toys are of good quality material.

GDB Approved Toys

General Use Toys:

These toys can be left readily available for a pup to play with at will.



Kong brand: black original and Ultra Kong 6". Black Kongs are stronger than red ones. Only the original Kong shape is approved; no balls, Frisbees, chews etc.



Goughnuts ring or stick; green or yellow (same strength) for most puppies and black for extremely hard chewers



Galileo 5" or 6" by Nylabone, also now packaged as 'Dino Bones'.

Nylabone products: Nyla Wishbone, Nyla Ring, Durachew Textured Ring, Nyla Knot, Dinosaur, DuraChew Hollow Stick, any Nylabone (original hard material) that is appropriately robust enough for the size of puppy. The products will be packaged as "BIG Chews", Dura Chews and Dental Chews.



Note: no chew products with any sort of rubber/plastic/fabric are approved.



Sterilized Bones: at least 4" long
No smoked or meaty bones.

With Supervision Only:

Tug toys should be put up, away from the puppy, after the game to maintain a balanced relationship. All of these toys can be interactive. Puppies must be closely observed the whole time they are playing with all of these toys, as they can be easily shredded and consumed:



Goughnuts Tug Toy



Rubber ring, rubber Figure 8 and JW rings tug toys



Olly Bone II (10" size recommended); made by Ollydog



Tuffy's Ultimate Tug-O-War



Bumi by West Paw Design (large size)



Jollyball (no handle) with a rope through middle, sold as Romp-N-Roll

Toss 'n' Floss is a similar large ball with rope through it, also approved



Raisers need to trim the frayed ends of the rope on the Jolly Ball to reduce the temptation for puppies to shred them. A very safe alternative is to remove the rope and replace it with the same plastic-covered cable our tie-downs are made of. A visit to the hardware store will supply cable and clamps to make a super durable “handle” for the pups to carry (see photo for example). Of course, this is a toy that is for supervised play only and should not be left with a puppy unattended.



Gallon sized or larger plastic bottles: Thoroughly rinsed, lids, labels and tops removed (**sturdy orange juice or detergent bottles only**) no water bottles or milk container jugs

**Restricted, for Younger Pups Only:
Discontinue use with puppies over 4 months of age**



FlexiChew products by Nylabone (not with any fabric/rubber/plastic as part of the toy)

Nylabone products labeled “Puppy Chews” are not approved due to the variation in durability; these include the keys, pacifier and rings.



Dental Chew products by Nylabone (not with any fabric/rubber/plastic as part of the toy)

Nylabone products labeled “Puppy Chews” are not approved due to the variation in durability; these include the keys, pacifier and rings.



Hercules bones (similar to above)



Flat, unstuffed fleece toys; no squeakers



GoughNuts Lite products

Original GoughNuts Lite is approved for puppies up to 12 weeks of age only

MaXX GoughNut Lite is approved for puppies up to 16 weeks of age

Note: The .75 GoughNuts Lite is not approved for puppies in raiser homes due to the small size

Unacceptable Toys:

- * Edible toys: cornstarch bones, rawhide chews/toys, pigs ears, cow hooves, edible Nylabones
- * Balls
- * Frisbees
- * Rope toys
- * Retrieving toys
- * Raw bones
- * Sticks
- * Personal items: socks, children's toys, etc.
- * Anything not on the approved list

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