



# Grafton Dog Obedience Club Inc.

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## CHOOSING TOYS FOR YOUR DOG

There are a multitude of toys available for dogs. However, not all are appropriate (or even safe) for every dog. Toys need to be sturdy enough for your dog, made of safe materials, and have no small parts that your dog could choke or injure itself on.

Selecting a toy that is the right size for your dog is also extremely important – a toy that is the right size for a small dog could cause choking if swallowed by a large dog.

Here are some tips for selecting an appropriate toy for your dog:

**Soft toys.** Look for non toxic filling and avoid toys with sharp or small parts that could be dangerous if swallowed (such as eyes, noses, bells, or some built in squeakers). Polystyrene beads used for filling can be inhaled so are also to be avoided. Op shops can be a great source of inexpensive soft toys for your dog providing you are careful to choose safe ones.

**Balls.** It is absolutely essential that you use a ball that is large enough that it can't be swallowed. I know of one much loved dog that died after swallowing and choking on a ball that was too small. There are super tough balls available for dogs that tend to chew their balls (which can also become a risk if the dog swallows part of the chewed up ball).

**Rope toys.** These can be great for playing fetch and tug games and for chewing. Cotton rope is best as it is softer and won't cause rope burns when playing tug. Cotton is also safer than synthetic for chewing as synthetic fibres are more likely to get caught on your dog's teeth or wrapped around the face or legs (which can be disastrous if they pull tight).

**Fetch toys.** Most of us have thrown sticks for our dogs to fetch but these can be dangerous if they splinter (or if your dog is a heavy chewer). Sticks can also cause severe injuries if the end of the stick punctures the mouth or throat. A safer option is a length of hose or short length of rope knotted on each end to prevent it unravelling. Frisbees are also great fun for dogs to fetch but again if your dog is a heavy chewer, it is better value in the long run to buy a sturdy one made especially for dogs.

There are many other safe and appropriate toys available for dogs. Visit your pet shop or check out: [www.aussiedog.com.au](http://www.aussiedog.com.au)

When evaluating toys for your dogs ask yourself "Could it be swallowed?" "Could my dog choke on it?" "Could it splinter, causing injury to my dog's mouth or throat?" "If swallowed, could it cause a blockage in the digestive system?" "Could it be poisonous?"

If you have doubts about the safety of a toy, it is best to avoid it altogether and certainly never leave your dog alone with it.

Carole Bryant©