

Garbage Hazards

Your dog loves leftovers and any other food he can mooch. You know if he could, he would tear open your garbage every day and root through that Eden of delightful smells and tastes. Besides the unappealing prospect of cleaning up a kitchen floor full of garbage every day, here are some other reasons you will want to prevent your dog from digging through the garbage can.

Food Poisoning

Unless you are a vegetarian, your garbage contains scraps of decomposing meat and poultry. These scraps can contain many bacteria that cause food poisoning, namely Salmonella in chicken and Clostridium in meat. These bacteria don't have any smell, so your pet will happily devour the tainted meat, unaware of the consequences. The illnesses these bacteria cause are painful and uncomfortable at the very least, and can be life-threatening.

Broken Glass

Bits of broken glass can cut unwary paws and mouths, as well as possibly being swallowed, causing internal damage and choking.

Bones

A dog's favorite treat, cooked bones can splinter and become lodged in the throat, abrading the mouth and causing the dog to choke or can puncture the intestines. If there are scraps of meat or poultry left on the bones, these can also cause food poisoning. Dried raw bones can be a splintering problem as well and should be discarded safely.

Tin Cans

The sharp, jagged edges of tin cans can be dangerous to the tender nose and mouth of your dog as he tries to lick the last remnants of food out of it. The longer food sits in an open can, the more likely it is the food will become tainted with lead. The acids in the decomposing food react with the lead lining, and if your dog eats this food he could suffer acute lead poisoning.

Chemicals

Discarded bottles of cleaning fluids, bleaches, dish granules, and countless other chemicals can all cause a variety of serious health problems if your dog gets some on his paws, or even worse, ingests some. Chemicals from discarded bottles can spill onto the food scraps, and your dog could accidentally ingest chemicals that way.

Suffocation

Your dog could easily get cellophane wrapped around his muzzle, or have his head become stuck inside discarded plastic bags like chip bags. A determined dog with time on his paws during a day can easily get into your garbage can, especially if he is a medium to large dog. Then he merely needs to knock the can over to have his feast. Most dogs can figure out how to pull open a cupboard with their paws if they try long enough. Securing your garbage cans is the only sure way to prevent your dog from getting inside. Buy metal garbage cans, it sounds impossible but a dog may chew through a rubber one. If there is a chemical spill it might eat through the plastic as well.

Make sure the garbage can is a sturdy, sealable one with a latched lid that will not come off if knocked over. Use the same kind of can you would use to keep raccoons out of your trash. If you secure the garbage can with rope it can't be tipped over. You can also position your garbage can in a place it can't be knocked over, like inside an inclosure. Keep your kitchen garbage inside a childproof latched cabinet or closet. Childproofing the doors will ensure that your dog does not pry them open.

Wrapping any empty chemical bottles being discarded in plastic bags before putting in them in the trash will safeguard your dog from chemical poisoning. If you suspect your dog managed to get inside the trash and is exhibiting the

following symptoms, call the vet immediately.

- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea (often bloody)
- Shock
- Panting
- Difficulty breathing
- Whining
- Pawing at face
- Lack of appetite
- Fever
- Panting
- Drooling
- Burns around the lips, mouth and tongue