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Rhodes Vet Clinic

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Newsletter

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We provide:

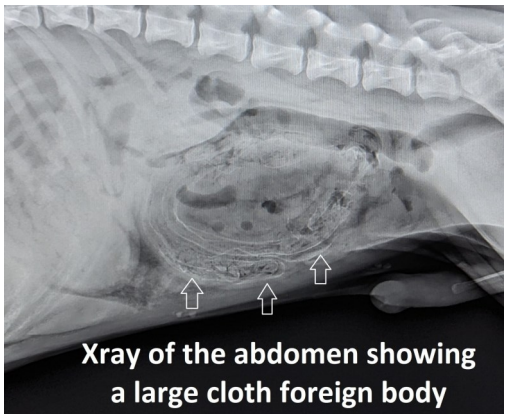
- Surgery & Medicine for small and large animals
- Herd Health Advice
- Cattle Pregnancy Testing
- Bull Fertility Testing
- Lameness in Cattle
- Equine Consults
- Soft Tissue & Orthopaedic Surgery
- Dentistry
- Digital X-ray
- Ultrasound
- In House Blood Testing
- Nutrition

Foreign Body Ingestion

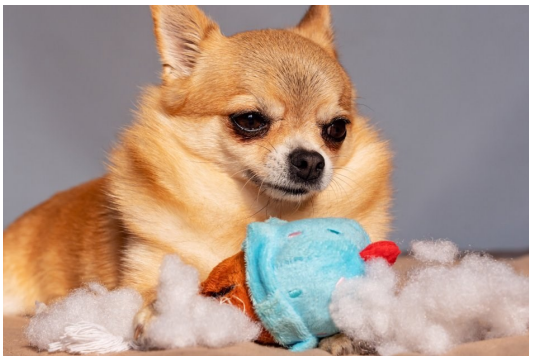
Foreign body ingestion is a common and potentially life-threatening issue in both dogs and cats, often resulting from their natural curiosity or chewing behavior. Pets, especially young or bored animals, may ingest non-food items that can lead to serious gastrointestinal (GI) blockages. Common foreign bodies include bones, socks, string, rubber balls, plastic toys, rocks, hair ties, and even corn cobs. Dogs are notorious for chewing and swallowing larger objects like tennis balls, underwear, or pieces of wood, while cats are particularly drawn to string-like materials such as yarn, tinsel, dental floss, or thread with needles attached—Once ingested, these objects can get lodged in the stomach or intestines, creating a blockage that prevents the normal passage of food and fluids.

Signs of a foreign body blockage often begin subtly and may include vomiting, sometimes repeatedly or shortly after eating, diarrhea or constipation, and a noticeable decrease in appetite or refusal to eat altogether. Lethargy, abdominal pain or bloating, whining, restlessness, and signs of distress when the abdomen is touched can also occur. In cats, vomiting and hiding behavior may be more common than obvious signs of pain. If the object causes a complete obstruction, symptoms can escalate quickly to severe dehydration, shock, or even rupture of the intestines, which can be fatal without prompt surgery. Diagnosis typically involves a physical examination, X-rays, and possibly an ultrasound or endoscopy. In some cases, the foreign object may pass on its own, but in many instances, surgical removal is required, particularly if there is a risk of perforation or prolonged blockage.

Early intervention is critical to prevent complications and improve the chances of full recovery. Pet owners should always monitor what their animals have access to and avoid leaving dangerous objects within reach. Providing appropriate chew toys, pet-proofing the home, and discouraging scavenging behavior during walks can go a long way in preventing ingestion of harmful items. If a pet is suspected of having swallowed something unusual, it is crucial to seek veterinary attention immediately—waiting too long can result in more invasive treatment, higher costs, and greater risk to the animal's life.



Xray of the abdomen showing a large cloth foreign body



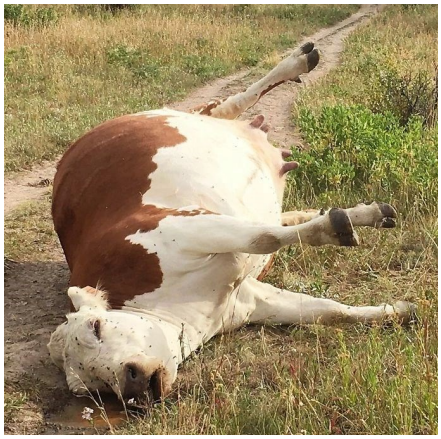
Simpson Office:
Please call 5232 2111

www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au

Colac Office:
Monday to Friday
8am to 6pm
Saturday 9am to 12 noon

We are available 24/7 for emergencies.
Our emergency number is: 5232 2111

Bloat in Cattle



Bloat in cattle is a common digestive disorder characterized by an excessive accumulation of gas in the rumen, leading to abdominal distension and potential respiratory distress. There are two main types of bloat: **pasture (frothy) bloat** and **gas (free-gas) bloat**. **Pasture bloat** typically occurs when cattle graze on lush, rapidly growing legume-dominant pastures, such as alfalfa or clover, particularly during cool, moist conditions. These plants contain soluble proteins and saponins that stabilize foam in the rumen. As fermentation proceeds, gas produced by microbial activity becomes trapped in this stable foam, preventing normal belching and leading to ruminal distension. **Gas bloat**, on the other hand, results from the inability of cattle to eructate (belch) free gas due to physical obstruction (e.g., a foreign body or positional change) or functional disturbances of rumen motility, such as vagal indigestion or esophageal blockage by root crops, apples, or feed boluses.

Clinical signs of bloat are often easy to recognize. Affected animals show visible distension of the left flank, discomfort, restlessness, and frequent attempts to urinate or defecate. They may grunt, extend their necks, and have labored breathing as pressure on the diaphragm increases. In severe cases, the mucous membranes become bluish (cyanotic), and animals may collapse and die rapidly from respiratory failure and circulatory shock. The condition can progress within 15 to 30 minutes, particularly in acute pasture bloat cases.

Causes differ between the two forms. Pasture bloat is mainly dietary, associated with high-protein, low-fiber, lush forages and sudden diet changes. Gas bloat arises from mechanical obstructions, nerve damage, or rumen atony secondary to diseases such as pneumonia or acidosis.

Prevention focuses on management and feeding practices. To prevent pasture bloat, cattle should be introduced gradually to legume-rich pastures and preferably fed dry hay before turnout. Mixed pastures with grasses reduce risk, as does avoiding grazing when dew or rain has moistened plants. Anti-foaming agents like poloxalene (Bloat Guard®) can be given in feed, blocks, or drenches. For gas bloat, prevention involves avoiding choke hazards, ensuring proper feed particle size, and maintaining herd health.

Treatment depends on severity. Mild cases may resolve if animals are removed from pasture and walked to stimulate belching. Administering anti-foaming agents orally can help break down rumen foam. In emergency situations with severe distension and breathing difficulty, a veterinarian may insert a stomach tube to relieve gas or perform a **trocarization** (puncturing the rumen through the left flank) to release pressure. Prompt recognition and intervention are critical to prevent fatal outcomes

Thank you to everyone who participated in our "Guess The Amount Dog Treats" competition, which raised over $160 for the McGrath Foundation. RVC has rounded up this donation to $500 for breast cancer research.

Congratulations to our winner, Lenny Garner who correctly guessed 840 treats!