



FREE GUIDE

Safe toys guide

What to look for, and what to avoid

Introduction

Not every toy on a pet store shelf is actually safe for unsupervised play, and toy safety needs vary a lot by chewing style and size. This guide covers what makes a toy genuinely safe, what to avoid, and a simple habit for catching wear before it becomes a hazard.

What makes a toy safe

Size, durability, and material all matter more than how appealing a toy looks on a shelf. A toy should be large enough that it can't be swallowed whole, sturdy enough to withstand your specific pet's chewing strength, and free of small parts (eyes, squeakers, stuffing) that can detach and be ingested.

Toys to avoid and why

- Toys with small, detachable parts that pose a choking risk once chewed loose.
- Cheap stuffed toys without reinforced seams, especially for strong chewers who can access the stuffing quickly.
- Bones and antlers that are harder than tooth enamel, which can crack teeth even in moderate chewers.
- String, yarn, or ribbon-based cat toys left out unsupervised — a common and serious ingestion hazard.

Supervised vs. unsupervised toys

Not every safe toy is safe to leave out all the time. A good rule of thumb: anything with parts that could come apart under determined chewing (squeaky toys, plush toys, anything with stitched-on features) should be a supervised "together" toy, while only genuinely durable, simple options are appropriate to leave out when your pet is alone.

How to inspect toys for wear

Build a quick habit of checking toys weekly for loose seams, exposed stuffing, cracked material, or pieces that are starting to separate. When in doubt, retire the toy — a slightly early replacement is a lot cheaper than an emergency vet visit for an ingested piece.

Toy safety inspection checklist

- ☐ Toy is sized appropriately for your pet and can't be swallowed whole
- ☐ No small, detachable parts (eyes, squeakers, bells)
- ☐ Material matches your pet's chewing strength
- ☐ String or ribbon-based toys are supervised only, never left out

- ☐ Weekly check for loose seams, cracks, or exposed stuffing
- ☐ Worn toys retired immediately rather than "one more day"

Summary

A safe toy is less about the price tag and more about matching the toy to your specific pet's size and chewing style — and checking on it regularly as it wears.

This guide is for general education only and is not a substitute for advice from a certified trainer, veterinarian, or veterinary behaviorist. If you're seeing signs of distress, aggression, or a sudden change in behavior, please consult a professional who can assess your pet directly.