



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

## Toy Policy

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 the puppy and use toys with caution with strong chewers.

Please review the document [Food Containing Toys](#) for guidelines on use and seeking permission to offer toys containing food.

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



**Ruff Enough Toys** from their "Guaranteed for Life Collection". Note: These toys are very durable and a good option for extremely hard chewers. However, just like any toy, they should be checked regularly for wear and tear and removed if the puppy is damaging the toy. Each one comes in two sizes: a small to medium, for dogs under 40lb, and an XL for dogs 40lb and over. The XL is quite heavy and probably would not be very appealing to a smaller puppy.

The Dawg-nut and the Ruff Dawg Cube are bouncy so keep this in mind with more active puppies – they might not be suitable for indoor access!

- Big Dawg Barbell Chew
- Dawg-Buster Chew Toy
- Dawg-nut Donut Chew
- Ruff Dawg Cube



**Nylabone products:** Galileo (5" or 6"), 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.





**Benebone products:** size MEDIUM or LARGE Wishbone, Zaggler, Maplestick, Fishbone shapes approved in all flavors.



**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



Pacific Loop™ from Ruffwear



Bull Fit French Linen Tug Toy (be sure to order the French Linen Tug and not Fire Hose Tug; available on Amazon.com)

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Tuffy's Ultimate Tug-O-War

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Bumi by West Paw Design (large size)

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**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

Note: 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*

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



**Nylabone products:** FlexiChew, Dental Chew products by Nylabone, Hercules bones (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.

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KONG Ring (Medium/Large)



KONG Wubba (regular or fleece “Snugga”)  
\*with supervision only; do not leave unattended



M.C.works Mango Dog Toy (available on  
Amazon.com)



Gnawt-a-Cone™ from Ruffwear



Tux Toy from West Paw Design



Flat, unstuffed fleece toys; no squeakers  
\*with supervision only; do not leave unattended



**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