

Human Food Hazards



#2 in a Series of Eight

Yeast Bread

What it's in: Uncooked homemade and store-bought bread dough that contains yeast.

Threat to pets: The dark, warm environment of a pet's stomach acts as an oven and encourages the dough to continue rising. This can result in a bowel obstruction or a bloated or distended stomach. The stomach may then twist, leading to a gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV). This is a life-threatening situation that requires emergency abdominal surgery and treatment for shock. As the yeast ferments in the stomach, it releases alcohol, which may lead to alcohol poisoning (see alcohol).

Signs: Bloat and GDV: Unproductive vomiting and retching, lethargy, weakness, tachycardia (elevated heart rate), collapse, and shock. Alcohol poisoning: Alcohol smell on the breath, neurological depression, hypothermia (low body temperature), hypotension (low blood pressure), seizures, and respiratory failure.

Treatment: Induce vomiting if the dough was recently ingested. To stop the rising of the dough, a cold-water gastric lavage may be performed. Aggressive intravenous fluids and dextrose (sugar), abdominal surgery, warming measures, and in-hospital monitoring may be needed.

Prognosis: Excellent if decontaminated soon after ingestion and the appropriate care is received. Poorer in cases of severe alcohol poisoning and bloat or GDV.