

## Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet First Answer

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Is tea toxic to dogs, in summary:** Yes: caffeine and theobromine in tea are toxic to dogs. Dose and size decide severity, the bag adds a hazard, decaf is not safe. Call the vet, do not wait.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

"Is tea toxic to dogs?" Yes, in the way that matters: the caffeine. This sits in the pets cluster beside [can dogs drink tea](#).

*Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in April 2026.*

*General information, not veterinary advice. Pets differ; if your animal has ingested caffeine or you are unsure, contact a vet or an animal poison line immediately.*

### Is tea toxic to dogs, at a glance

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

Question	The answer
Toxic?	Yes, the issue is caffeine (and theobromine); dogs metabolise it poorly
Dose matters	A lick of weak milky tea vs a chewed teabag are very different; small dogs at higher risk
Teabag hazard	The bag itself is a gut-obstruction and concentrated-caffeine risk
Decaf	Not safe by default, reduced is not zero
Signs	Restlessness, racing heart, vomiting, tremors, call the vet, do not wait

### What is toxic, and why dose matters

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What is toxic, and why dose matters, Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

Tea contains caffeine and a small amount of theobromine, the same family of compounds that make chocolate dangerous to dogs, and dogs metabolise them far more slowly than people, so a quantity that is trivial for a human can be genuinely harmful to a dog. Dose is the whole picture: a single lick of weak, milky, cooled tea from a large dog is a watch-and-see, while a small dog that has eaten a teabag, got into loose leaf, or drunk a strong fresh brew is a phone-the-vet-now situation, because both the dose per kilogram and the concentration matter, and small breeds, puppies and older dogs with reduced liver or kidney function are at markedly higher risk. Decaf is reduced, not eliminated, so it is not a safe default. The signs that mean act now are not subtle, restlessness, a racing or irregular heartbeat, vomiting, diarrhoea, tremors or any marked behaviour change, and the clear instruction is to contact a vet or an out-of-hours service immediately rather than search for reassurance online.

## The teabag hazard, and prevention

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The teabag hazard, and prevention, Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

The teabag deserves its own paragraph because it is the exposure people least expect and the worst-case household scenario. From a dog's point of view a dry teabag is a small parcel of concentrated caffeine wrapped in material it cannot digest: chewed and swallowed it delivers a higher dose per gram than brewed tea and adds the separate risk of a gut obstruction from the bag, string and tag. Loose leaf spilled is similar, concentrated and quick to ingest, and a bin or compost heap of used bags is a realistic route rather than a theoretical one, because the milk and sugar residue is attractive. Prevention is therefore the entire strategy: keep mugs, pots, loose leaf and the bag bin out of reach, clean spills, and treat anything sweetened as doubly dangerous, since xylitol in some sugar-free products is separately and rapidly toxic to dogs. See [disposing of used bags](#).

## If your dog drinks tea

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for If your dog drinks tea, Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

The question owners arrive with in a panic is "my dog drank some of my tea, what do I do?" Judge by size and dose: a single lick of weak milky tea from a large dog is usually a watch-and-see, but a small dog, a strong brew, a chewed bag or anything sweetened is a call-now, and acting early always beats waiting for symptoms. It helps the vet to know roughly how much, what form (brewed, leaf, bag, sweetened) and when. See [my dog drank tea, what to do](#) and the companion [safe herbal teas for dogs](#).

## What to buy

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy, Is Tea Toxic to Dogs? The Vet-First Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/is-tea-toxic-to-dogs/>*

Tea stays a human pleasure. For caffeine-free options people enjoy, browse the [rooibos range](#) or the wider [herbal range](#), or the full [tea shop](#); free UK delivery over £35.

## Reference noted

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- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

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## Pet-safety reading

- [Safe herbal teas for dogs](#)
- [Household uses for tea](#)
- [Caffeine in tea](#)
- [Caffeine-free tea](#)

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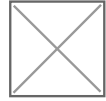
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