# My Dog Drank Tea: What to Do

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **If your dog drank tea, in summary:** A small sip is fine, a half-mug wants monitoring, an eaten teabag or any xylitol-sweetened tea warrants a vet call; caffeine is the variable, dog size the multiplier.

If your dog has just drunk tea, here is what to do, step by step, without panicking. This sits in the pets cluster beside is tea toxic to dogs.

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

*General information, not veterinary advice. Dogs react differently from people; if yours has had caffeine, or you are not sure, phone a vet or a pet poison helpline without delay.*

## In short: my dog drank tea

| Situation | The answer |
|---|---|
| Small sip / lick from a milky cup | Almost always fine; monitor, no action |
| Half a mug of normal British tea | Mild caffeine load; watch for jitters, panting |
| Drank a teabag whole | Vet call; concentrated caffeine + foreign body risk |
| Multiple cups / strong coffee mistaken for tea | Vet immediately; caffeine toxicity risk |
| Herbal infusion (mint, chamomile, rooibos) | Generally safer; check ingredients for sage/peppermint excess |
| Sweetened tea | Watch for xylitol if "sugar-free" (dangerous to dogs) |
| Small dog | Same amount is proportionally larger; lower threshold for vet |
| If in doubt | Phone vet or Animal PoisonLine (01202 509000) |

## Step by step

Step one is to assess, not panic: estimate how much, how strong, and the size of the dog. A single lick of milky tea from a small spill is usually minor; a mug of strong tea, or eaten teabags or loose leaf, is not. Step two: for anything beyond a trivial lick, especially a small dog, strong tea, or eaten bags or leaves, phone a vet or an animal poison line now rather than waiting for symptoms. Step three: do not self-treat, and in

particular do not induce vomiting or give anything unless a vet instructs, because the wrong action can make things worse. And if a teabag was eaten, say so, because it carries concentrated caffeine plus a possible gut-obstruction risk. See is tea toxic to dogs.

### What "watch for signs" means, hour by hour

Caffeine reaches peak blood level in a dog roughly 30 to 90 minutes after ingestion, so the first hour and a half is the window in which symptoms appear if they are going to. Mild signs (some restlessness, mild panting, unsettled behaviour, refusing to nap, mild stomach upset) suggest a low-end dose, and watchful waiting at home is reasonable; the dog should be back to normal within four to six hours as the caffeine clears. Moderate signs (vomiting, more pronounced tremors, a fast heart rate visible at the chest, unusual hyperactivity) mean a vet call. Severe signs (collapse, seizures, severe vomiting, a sustained rapid heart rate, very high temperature, agitation) are an emergency, and the next step is the nearest open emergency vet, not the regular surgery. Keep a phone nearby, do not induce vomiting unless a vet instructs, and write down the time of ingestion, the type and strength of tea, and roughly how much, because all three help the vet decide faster.

### Prevention, and the Animal PoisonLine

Most incidents are accidental rather than the dog seeking caffeine, so prevention is short and practical: do not leave half-finished mugs on low tables or the floor; clear up after tea time; keep used teabags in a sealed bin liner rather than an open kitchen-bin top a dog can nose open, since dogs find them appealing for the milk and sugar smell; and keep loose-leaf tins in a cupboard, not on a low shelf or counter. Save the Animal PoisonLine number (01202 509000 in the UK, 24-hour) in your phone so it is there without searching in a crisis. One footnote worth heeding: cats are smaller and more caffeine-sensitive, so the threshold for a vet call is lower, and an apparently small incident in a cat warrants a phone call rather than watchful waiting, see can cats drink tea.


#### Want to actually buy a good one?

For your own cup, buy one really good tea and judge it by taste, not the marketing, and keep it out of the dog's reach. To see the range, browse tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk or the full tea shop. The wiki rule applies to your cup, not the dog's: trust the cup and description over marketing, weigh cost per cup, and get UK delivery free above £35.



FROM THE CURATOR

*teas* · Try the cheapest plain tea of a style first, and keep the mug where paws cannot reach. Upgrade only once you like the style, and store the caddy high up.

### Pet-safety reading

- Is tea toxic to dogs
- Can dogs drink tea
- Can cats drink tea
- Safe herbal teas for dogs

### More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag


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