How to Increase Egg Production in Chickens During Winter

Winter can be a challenging season for backyard chicken keepers and small-scale farmers. Shorter daylight hours, colder temperatures, and limited forage often cause a noticeable drop in egg production. Fortunately, with the right management strategies, you can **increase egg production in chickens during winter** and keep your flock healthy and productive year-round.

In this guide, you'll learn proven, practical methods to help your hens lay more eggs throughout the cold months.



Why Chickens Lay Fewer Eggs in

Winter

Before addressing solutions, it’s important to understand why egg production declines in winter:

- **Reduced daylight** slows hens’ reproductive cycles
- **Cold stress** diverts energy from egg laying to body warmth
- **Poor nutrition** from limited grazing affects egg development
- **Molting** often occurs in late fall or early winter

Addressing these factors directly is the key to improving winter egg production.

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1. Increase Daylight Hours for Winter Egg Production

Light exposure is the **number one factor** influencing egg production in chickens.

How Much Light Do Chickens Need?

Hens require **14–16 hours of light per day** to maintain consistent laying. In winter, natural daylight may drop to 8–10 hours.

How to Add Supplemental Lighting

Avoid leaving lights on all night, which can stress hens

Use a **low-watt LED or incandescent bulb** (40–60 watts)

Install a **timer** to turn lights on early in the morning

2. Feed a High-Quality Winter Layer Diet

Cold weather increases a chicken’s caloric needs. Without proper nutrition, egg production will suffer.

Best Winter Feed for Laying Hens

- **Layer feed (16–18% protein)** as the primary diet
- **Cracked corn or scratch grains** in the evening for added energy
- **High-protein treats** (mealworms, sunflower seeds) in moderation

Don’t Forget Calcium

Strong eggshells require calcium:

- Offer **free-choice crushed oyster shell**
- Save and crush clean eggshells as a supplement

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3. Keep Chickens Warm (Without Overheating)

Chickens are cold-hardy, but excessive cold can reduce egg laying.

Ideal Winter Coop Conditions

- Dry, draft-free coop
- Proper ventilation (to prevent moisture buildup)

- Deep bedding using the **deep litter method** for insulation

⚠ Avoid heat lamps unless absolutely necessary—fire risk is high, and sudden temperature changes can stress birds.

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4. Reduce Stress to Maintain Egg Production

Stress directly impacts egg production, especially during winter.

Common Winter Stressors

- Overcrowding in the coop
- Poor ventilation and ammonia buildup
- Frozen water sources
- Predators drawn closer by snow cover

How to Minimize Stress

- Ensure **fresh, unfrozen water** at all times
- Provide **adequate roost space**
- Maintain a consistent feeding and lighting schedule

Happy hens are productive hens—even in winter.

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5. Support Chickens Through Molting

Many hens molt in late fall or early winter, temporarily stopping egg production.

How to Help Molting Hens

- Increase protein intake to **18–20%**
- Avoid handling chickens excessively
- Be patient—egg laying resumes once molting ends

Molting is natural, and forcing egg production during this period can harm long-term health.

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6. Choose Cold-Hardy, Winter-Laying Breeds

If winter eggs are a priority, breed selection matters.

Best Chicken Breeds for Winter Egg Production

- **Rhode Island Red**
- **Plymouth Rock**
- **Australorp**
- **Leghorn**
- **Wyandotte**

These breeds are known for cold tolerance and consistent winter laying.

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7. Provide Winter Enrichment and

Exercise

Bored or inactive chickens are more prone to stress and reduced laying.

Simple Winter Enrichment Ideas

- Hang cabbage or leafy greens for pecking
- Scatter scratch grains in bedding
- Add perches or straw bales for exploration

Movement improves circulation and overall health, supporting egg production.

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8. Keep Water From Freezing

Water is essential for egg formation—eggs are nearly **75% water**.

Winter Water Tips

- Use heated waterers or bases
- Check water multiple times daily
- Never allow chickens to go without water, even for a few hours

Frozen water is one of the most overlooked causes of winter egg decline.

Frequently Asked Questions About Winter Egg Production

Do chickens naturally stop laying in winter?

Not entirely. Most slow down due to reduced daylight, but proper lighting and care can maintain production.

Is artificial lighting bad for chickens?

No, when used responsibly. Limit light to 14–16 hours daily and allow darkness for rest.

How long does it take to see results?

With proper lighting and nutrition, many flocks show improvement within **2–3 weeks**.

Final Thoughts: Boosting Winter Egg Production Naturally

Increasing egg production in chickens during winter is absolutely achievable with the right approach. By managing light exposure, nutrition, warmth, hydration, and stress, you can keep your flock productive even during the coldest months.

A well-cared-for chicken doesn’t just survive winter—it thrives.

Why Does My Cat Bite Me? Understanding Cat Biting Behavior and How to Stop It

If you've ever asked yourself, **"Why does my cat bite me?"**, you're not alone. One minute your cat is purring, and the next they're biting your hand or arm. While this behavior can be confusing and painful, cat bites are rarely random or mean-spirited.

In most cases, **cat biting is a form of communication**. Understanding the reasons behind it can help you prevent future bites and improve your relationship with your cat.



Common Reasons Why Cats Bite Their

Owners

1. Overstimulation From Petting

One of the most common answers to *“why does my cat bite me when I pet him?”* is **overstimulation**.

Cats enjoy affection, but they have a lower tolerance for prolonged touch than dogs. When petting becomes overwhelming, a cat may bite to say *“That’s enough.”*

Warning signs of overstimulation include:

- Tail flicking or lashing
- Ears turning sideways or flat
- Tense body posture
- Skin rippling along the back

How to prevent it:
Keep petting sessions short and stop at the first sign of discomfort. Focus on areas cats usually enjoy, such as the cheeks, chin, and head.

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2. Play Aggression

If your cat bites your hands, ankles, or feet—especially during movement—it’s likely **play aggression**.

Cats are natural hunters, and moving hands or feet can trigger their instinct to pounce.

Common triggers:

- Using hands as toys
- Rough play as a kitten

- Lack of interactive toys

How to prevent it:

- Never play with your cat using your hands
- Use wand toys, feather toys, or balls
- Schedule daily play sessions to release energy

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3. “Love Bites” or Affectionate Nipping

Some cats give gentle nips while grooming or cuddling. These **love bites** are usually not aggressive and don’t break the skin.

However, if allowed to continue, they can become harder bites over time.

What to do:
Gently withdraw attention when biting starts to set clear boundaries.

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4. Fear, Stress, or Anxiety

A frightened or anxious cat may bite as a **defensive reaction**.

Common causes include:

- Loud noises
- Sudden movements
- Being picked up unexpectedly
- New pets or people in the home

How to help:
Let your cat approach interactions at their own pace and provide safe, quiet escape areas.

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5. Redirected Aggression

Redirected aggression occurs when your cat becomes aroused by something they can't reach—such as another animal outside—and **redirects that frustration onto you**.

Signs may include dilated pupils, growling, or sudden biting without warning.

How to prevent it:

- Avoid touching your cat during high-arousal moments
- Block visual triggers like outdoor animals
- Give your cat time to calm down

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6. Pain or Medical Issues

If you're wondering **"why does my cat suddenly bite me?"**, health issues may be the cause.

Potential medical reasons include:

- Arthritis
- Dental problems
- Injuries
- Skin conditions

Important:

Sudden or escalating biting behavior should always be evaluated by a veterinarian.

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7. Territorial or Protective Behavior

Cats are territorial by nature. Biting may occur if your cat feels their space, food, or favorite spots are being threatened—especially in multi-pet households.

Helpful tips:

- Provide separate resources (litter boxes, food bowls)
- Avoid forced interactions
- Use calming pheromone diffusers if needed

What to Do When Your Cat Bites You

Avoid these responses:

- Yelling or scolding
- Physical punishment
- Chasing or grabbing your cat

These can increase fear and aggression.

Instead:

- Remain calm
- Slowly remove yourself from the situation
- End interaction immediately
- Reward calm, gentle behavior

Consistency is key to changing biting behavior.

When Should You Seek Professional Help?

You should consult a veterinarian or feline behaviorist if:

- Bites frequently break the skin
- Aggression is worsening
- There’s no clear trigger
- Behavior changes suddenly

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why does my cat bite me out of nowhere?

Most “random” bites are caused by overstimulation, redirected aggression, or pain. Cats usually show subtle warning signs before biting.

Why does my cat bite me gently?

Gentle bites are often love bites or playful behavior, but they should still be discouraged to prevent escalation.

Is cat biting a sign of aggression?

Not always. Biting is often a form of communication, play, or stress response—not true aggression.

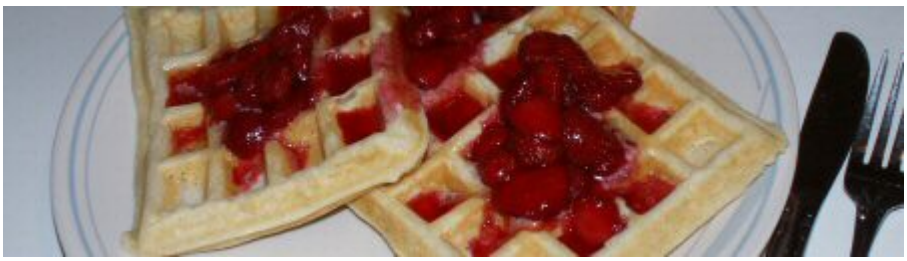
Final Thoughts: Understanding Your Cat's Bites

So, **why does your cat bite you?** In most cases, biting is your cat's way of communicating discomfort, excitement, or boundaries. Learning your cat's body language, respecting their limits, and providing proper enrichment can dramatically reduce biting behavior.

With patience and understanding, you can turn confusing bites into clear communication—and build a stronger bond with your cat.

Can Dogs Eat Strawberries?

Strawberries are a popular, sweet snack for humans—but what about our canine companions? If you've ever caught your dog eyeing your fruit bowl, you may have wondered whether strawberries are safe for dogs. The good news is **yes, dogs can eat strawberries**—but there are a few important things to know before sharing this tasty treat.



Strawberries are awesome but can dogs have strawberries?

Are Strawberries Safe for Dogs?

Strawberries are **non-toxic to dogs** and are generally safe when fed in moderation. They contain natural sugars, fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants that can be beneficial for dogs just as they are for people. However, like any human food, strawberries should be offered thoughtfully and prepared properly.

Health Benefits of Strawberries for Dogs

When given occasionally and in appropriate portions, strawberries can provide several benefits:

1. Rich in Vitamins

Strawberries are a good source of **vitamin C**, which supports immune health, and **vitamin B6**, which helps with metabolism and brain function.

2. High in Antioxidants

Antioxidants help fight free radicals, which may support healthy aging and overall wellness in dogs.

3. Supports Digestion

Strawberries contain **fiber**, which can aid digestion and help regulate bowel movements.

4. Low in Calories

Compared to many commercial dog treats, strawberries are relatively low in calories, making them a lighter option for dogs watching their weight.

Potential Risks to Be Aware Of

While strawberries are safe, there are a few considerations to keep in mind:

Natural Sugar Content

Strawberries contain natural sugars. Too many can contribute to weight gain or blood sugar issues, especially in dogs with diabetes.

Choking Hazard

Whole strawberries can be a choking risk, particularly for small dogs. Always cut strawberries into **small, bite-sized pieces**.

Pesticides and Chemicals

Strawberries often rank high for pesticide residue. Always **wash them thoroughly** before feeding them to your dog, or opt for organic strawberries when possible.

Allergic Reactions

Although rare, some dogs may have food sensitivities. Introduce strawberries slowly and watch for signs such as itching, vomiting, or diarrhea.

How to Safely Feed Strawberries to Your Dog

To make strawberries a safe and enjoyable treat, follow these tips:

- **Wash thoroughly** to remove dirt and chemicals
- **Remove the leaves and stems**, which can be hard to digest

- **Cut into small pieces** appropriate for your dog's size
- **Serve plain**—no sugar, syrup, chocolate, or whipped cream
- **Feed in moderation**, not as a meal replacement

How Many Strawberries Can Dogs Eat?

Portion size depends on your dog's size and health:

- **Small dogs**: 1–2 small strawberry pieces
- **Medium dogs**: 2–4 pieces
- **Large dogs**: A small handful

As a general rule, treats (including fruit) should make up **no more than 10% of your dog's daily caloric intake**.

Can Dogs Eat Frozen or Blended Strawberries?

Yes—with care. **Frozen strawberries** can be a refreshing summer treat, but they should be cut into small pieces to prevent tooth damage or choking.
Blended strawberries can be mixed into dog-safe foods like plain yogurt (xylitol-free), but avoid adding sweeteners or other ingredients.

Strawberries vs. Strawberry-Flavored Foods

While fresh strawberries are safe, **strawberry-flavored products are often not**. Ice cream, candy, jams, and baked goods may contain:

- Added sugars
- Artificial sweeteners (especially **xylitol**, which is

toxic to dogs)
- Chocolate or dairy, which can cause digestive upset

Always stick to **fresh, plain strawberries**.

When to Avoid Feeding Strawberries

You should avoid strawberries—or talk to your veterinarian first—if your dog:

- Has diabetes
- Is overweight
- Has a sensitive stomach or food allergies



Final Thoughts

So, **can dogs eat strawberries?** Absolutely—when served properly and in moderation. Strawberries can be a healthy, tasty treat that many dogs enjoy. Just remember that every dog is different, and what works well for one may not suit another.

If you’re ever unsure about adding a new food to your dog’s diet, your veterinarian is the best source of personalized advice.

Easy Ways to Catch More Fish

A wise old man I used to fish for Musky with when I was younger told me one day, “10% of the fishermen catch 90% of fish”. Whether that’s accurate or not I can’t say, but the more I have thought about that over the years, the more I think he really was onto something with that statement. Fishing can be a complex affair and some species are easier to consistently catch compared to others, but at some point no matter the species, fish just do not want to cooperate. In this article we will discuss some great tactics to improve your time on the water, despite the species.



Do your Homework

This is one of the most paramount parts of being successful on the water, you have to do your due diligence on the species you wish to pursue and really study up on that particular species, habitat, habits, forage base, locations at different times of the year, and more. Knowing the fish in and out is extremely important, do your research online, read about it in fishing magazines. There are an absolute ton of resources at our disposal today, and the average person has more information in their pocket thanks to smartphones than any human being in history. While you can study and research your preferred fish species at will, there really is no substitute for experience on the water. I have always told my Guide Clients, “Fish don’t read magazines“ and this has always been my way to show my clients in the boat that you need to adapt and think outside the box from standard tactics and presentations on a regular basis.



Learn the waters

You won’t catch fish if you don’t know where they frequently spend their time, this changes with weather patterns and seasons. GPS units have really changed the game if you’re on larger bodies of water, giving the angler the ability to set waypoints on structure such as drop offs, points, humps, brush piles, rock piles etc. along with the GPS modern sonar including side imaging has changed the game, giving anglers a precise picture of what’s below the surface, and even allowing the angler to distinguish between vegetation types, like milfoil or cabbage. My rule for any angler fishing a new body of water, is to spend a good portion of your trip without a rod in your hands, I frequently fish new lakes and depending on the size, spend multiple hours zig zagging over breaklines, mapping and exploring, and looking for baitfish. This process helps me eliminate dead water, and allows me to focus on the best looking structure and areas I want to spend my efforts on.

Find the Bait Find the Fish

This tip is predominantly for predatory species but certainly applies to prey fish like bluegills and crappies as well. This goes back to the rule of “you won’t catch fish if you’re not putting your bait by fish”. Baitfish congregate in different areas throughout the day, and season depending on weather conditions. If you find big schools of bait fish one day, chances are they are gone the next, so finding the food on every trip should be a major consideration. The general rule of thumb is if you find bait, the big fish aren’t far away. For panfish species and the like, this is also true, bug hatches for instance are an indicator of potential feeding activity Here in northern Wisconsin it’s well known that during the mayfly hatches in spring fishing can become very tough due to the overwhelming amount of available food for fish like panfish and trout. You can also see bug activity on your sonar, in the evening larvae and bugs from the bottom of the lake will rise in the water columns in certain areas. This can also make fishing a feast or famine affair.



Don’t Leave Fish to Find Fish

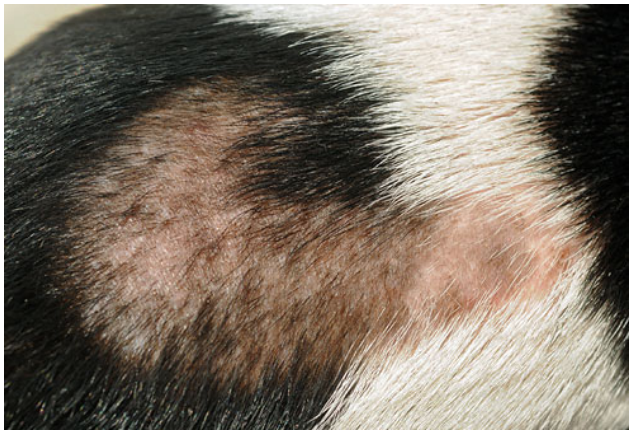
This saying in the Musky fishing world is like holy scripture, but it applies in many cases to all fish species. If you’re on a spot that is normally successful, and are catching or seeing fish but not catching them, it’s usually only a matter of time. Fish feeding moods can change quickly, so if you know the fish are there, don’t leave to try different spots, or if you do, make sure your back on that spot at peak feeding times or if any type of weather changes occur. I know this might sound like common sense, but I see people do this on a very regular basis. In one instance on the water, I fished a 300 yard stretch of a lake for 6 hours straight, casting up and down nonstop and never left to fish another spot. I contacted 9 muskies but couldn’t get any of them to commit until moonrise when I finally hooked into a 48 inch fish. Persistence pays off.

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out our other exclusive guides on LincOn.com on many subjects.

My Dog Has Crusty Scabs On His Back

There are several causes of crusty scabs on a dog's skin. You are probably concerned that there is a skin problem, allergies, bacterial infection, fungal infection or even ectoparasites.



Crusty scabs on a dogs back

What If the Crusty Scabs Are Caused By Allergies?

Allergies can certainly be a cause of the crusty scabs on your dog's back. Your dog might have an environmental allergy to pollen, laundry detergents, shampoos, soaps, cleaning products and lawn chemicals. Food allergies can also cause skin problems in some dogs. If you know there has been a recent change in your dog's environment or food, you may first try removing the change to see if the crusty scabs heal. For example, if you washed your dog's bedding in a new laundry

detergent and the dog immediately thereafter developed the crusty scabs, try rewashing the bedding in your old detergent. If after removing the recent change, your dog still has crusty scabs on her back, a veterinarian may need to prescribe an anti-allergy drug along with steroids or have you apply an ointment or lotion on the affected areas.

What If the Crusty Scabs Are Caused By a Bacterial Infection?



Bacterial skin infection on a dog

A bacterial infection called folliculitis may be the cause of the irritation, bumps, sores and scabs on your dog's back. This can be caused by allergies, psoriasis, fleas or injury. A bacterial infection may occur when your dog is continuously scratching his skin, breaking through the layers of skin creating cuts where bacteria gains entry, develops an infection and causes puss-filled sores and crusty scabs. Causes of the itching could be external parasites.

1. Fleas: Check your dog for fleas. Look for an area where your dog's hair is thin; under the arms, the groan or belly, then examine the area for very small black insects. A dog with fleas can obsessively lick, scratch and chew at the skin which can result in sores. A flea infestation can cause blood loss, which can lead to anemia.

2. Mites: Mites can cause mange in a dog. It is a common skin problem in a dog that produces similar problems caused by fleas. If the skin condition becomes severe, your dog’s hair may fall out and the skin will be covered with crusty scabs.
3. Ticks: Ticks are an insect that will partially embedded themselves into your dog’s skin. Most dog owners can remove a tick themselves. There are several devices on the market made especially for removing ticks. If you do not have one of these on hand, use a pair of tweezers, position them as closely to the dog’s skin as possible, firmly grasp the tick and pull out of the skin. Be sure you have also removed the tick’s head. If the ticks heads remains embedded in the skin, it can lead to infection.

Additional Causes of Crusty Scabs on a Dog’s Back

1. Fungal infection: A fungal infection called ringworm can result in red, irritated skin, bumps, scaly skin, itchiness and hair loss. Puppies under a year old are most prone to this kind of infection. Ringworm gets its named because it appears as a circular, ring-like patch of irritated skin. Your veterinarian will want to see the dog and will prescribe an ointment.
2. Hormonal imbalance: Your veterinarian can diagnose a hormone imbalance if it is the cause of your dog having crusty scabs on her back.
3. Auto-Immune Disorder: Whenever a dog’s immune system becomes compromised it cannot fight skin irritants, or the dog’s own immune system may be working against itself. This can also cause crusty scabs, but needs to be diagnosed by your veterinarian.
4. Nutritional Deficit: Your dog may not be getting all the proper minerals and vitamins necessary and develops skin

irritation, itchiness, and rashes that lead to sores and scabs on your dog’s skin. Your veterinarian will prescribe a specifically, balanced diet that is formulated for your dog’s needs. This food will keep the skin healthy, moisturized, and coat glossy.

5. Yeast Infection: This is a common kind of skin problem. Yeast is normally present on the skin of a dog’s body. Problems occur when the yeast population builds up in a warm, moist place and causes irritated, itchy, discolored skin. A dog will chew, lick, and scratch the skin causing sores and scabs. Your veterinarian will diagnose and prescribe a treatment.

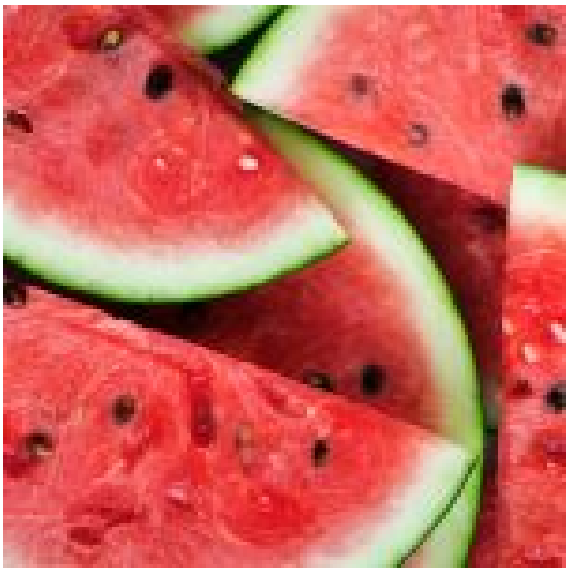


Yeast infection on a dogs skin

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Is Watermelon Good for My Dog?

Yes! Watermelon is an excellent source of vitamins and nutrients. It is also 92% water; which during hot summer months, helps keep your dog cool. Watermelon seeds and rinds, however, are not good for your dog and could actually cause serious health problems. So please, avoid feeding the seeds or rinds to your dogs.



Watermellon

How is Watermelon Good for My Dog?

- Watermelon contains potassium, vitamins A, B6 and C. It also contains a healthy amount of nature plant fiber which is beneficial for your dog’s digestion.
- Watermelon also contains lycopene which is a healthy antioxidant that helps prevent some cancers.
- Watermelon is fat-free, low in calories, low in sodium (salt) and cholesterol-free.
- Watermelon is also a fantastic source of water. Giving your dog a snack of watermelon on a hot day will be refreshing and help prevent dehydration.

When is Watermelon Bad for Your Dog?

Eating anything in excess, even for dogs, is bad. Watermelon should never make up a large portion of your dog's diet. If you give your dog an excess amount of watermelon, some dogs will experience diarrhea and other gastrointestinal upset.

When Is Watermelon Dangerous for Your Dog?

Watermelon should be removed from the rind (the outer part) before feeding the melon to your dog. You will also need to remove as many of the seeds as possible, or purchase a seedless variety. The rind is very hard, difficult to chew and could cause intestinal blockage in the dog. The seeds, especially for small dogs, may cause blockage, which can lead to serious intestinal problems. Large dogs should not have any problems passing a few seeds, but it is best to remove as many seeds as possible.

What Are the Danger Signs If Your Dog Eats Too Much Watermelon or the Watermelon Rind and Seeds?

If you feel that your dog has eaten too much watermelon, or the seeds and/or rind, you will watch for:

- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Lethargy
- Abdominal pain

If your dog develops any of these symptoms, consult your veterinarian for treatment.

Only Offer Natural Watermelon to Your Dog

Some products are marketed as watermelon flavored, but are in fact made up of entirely artificial products. These artificial products may contain sugars, chemicals, and other substances that can make your dog sick. Artificial watermelon products frequently contain xylitol, which can be toxin to dogs. Never feed your dog any foods with large amounts of sugar as it may cause gastrointestinal problems, obesity and diabetes.



Dog eating watermellon

How to Offer Watermelon to Your Dog?

Watermelon can be a quick, healthy treat for your dog. Remember to remove the seeds and rind before offering it to your dog. Cut pieces of watermelon into cubes for an easy to eat treat. Another satisfying way to offer a watermelon treat

is to puree the watermelon in your blender. Pour the puree into ice cube trays half-way, then fill the rest of the way with plain, low-fat yogurt and then freeze. Do not use a yogurt full of sugars or other additives. After the cubes have frozen, place them in a zip-top freezer bag and store in your freezer. On a hot day, offer one of the cubes to your dog for a healthy treat. If you want to make the watermelon cubes more delicious, you may add other safe and healthy ingredients like blueberries, lemon, and black salt. Lemon contains vitamin C, which is beneficial for the dog’s health in the hot season.

Hopefully you found this Guide helpful. Be sure to check out out other Guides!