

Tummy troubles: why stomach upsets are one of the most common reasons pets need help

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New research from our Admiral UK Pet business, suggests that dogs and cats experience gastrointestinal issues such as vomiting and diarrhoea around four times a year on average. The data with online vet partner PawSquad also indicates tummy troubles are a leading reason owners seek advice — accounting for 28 per cent of PawSquad calls in 2025.

Why tummy trouble matters

Most pets will have the occasional upset stomach - but what starts as a minor digestive issue can sometimes escalate quickly. In the most serious cases,

treatment for swallowed objects can run into thousands of pounds. Admiral's highest value single claims for ingested objects have ranged from £7,000 to £12,000.

A dog-eat-sock world: what pets are putting in their mouths

PawSquad vets regularly advise owners after their pets swallow items they shouldn't. Last year, the team supported cases involving socks, toy squeakers, hand cream, sanitary pads - and, for one seaside-loving pet, even a starfish. The research echoed this, with 16 per cent of dog owners saying their pet has ingested fabric items such as bedding and clothing.

The hidden risk: human medicines and supplements

Ingestion risk isn't limited to unexpected objects. Admiral's research found that a quarter (25 per cent) of pet owners say they've given their dog or cat human medication such as paracetamol. While some did so on veterinary advice, others turned to search engines - and 32 per cent of those who had given human medication said they did so after advice from AI tools.

It's a well intentioned decision that can have serious consequences. Medicines such as paracetamol (acetaminophen) and ibuprofen can be extremely dangerous to pets - especially cats - and should only ever be used under clear instruction from a vet.