

## Communication 58/2024

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### **Neurological abnormalities in dogs: National network follows up on clues**

The University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (TiHo) reports that since August 2024 it has observed an increase in cases throughout Germany in which dogs with acute and sometimes severe neurological symptoms have been presented to veterinarians. Investigations into the cause of the illness are ongoing. A network of regional authorities from the German federal states ("Länder"), universities and laboratories, poison centres (GIZ), the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) are working closely together on this. One of the issues currently being discussed is whether and why chewing bones could be a possible source of the symptoms described.

The University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (TiHo) reports that it has observed an increase in cases throughout Germany in which dogs with acute and sometimes severe neurological symptoms have been presented to a veterinarian. Similar cases have also been reported in other European countries such as Finland and Estonia. The symptoms can vary in type and severity, ranging from spontaneous, extreme excitement, panic attacks accompanied by howling and attempts to escape, to phases of aggression, hallucinations and even epileptic seizures. The course of the illness can last for several days to weeks and vary in the type and severity of the symptoms. The TiHo emphasises that in most cases, treatment of the symptoms leads to improvement. Therefore, if such symptoms occur, it is recommended that the dog is immediately taken to a veterinary or animal neurology practice for further examination. [Voluntary reporting of poisoning](#) to the BfR either by pet owners or by veterinary practices can help to improve the picture of the occurrence of corresponding symptoms and to clarify the cause.

A network of experts in Germany is currently investigating possible causes of the symptoms, including chewing bones. Contact institutions for information on the current status of the investigation are the authorities of the federal states ("Länder") that are responsible for the monitoring of feed safety.

Chew bones or chew rolls for dogs are advertised as improving the dental hygiene of the animals, strengthening the jaw muscles and serving as an occupation opportunity. They are edible and are usually made from the skin of cattle, pigs or various types of poultry.

**Further information on the BfR website on the subject of feed safety**

Topic page on the health assessment of feeds

[https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/health\\_assessment\\_of\\_feeds-54462.html](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/health_assessment_of_feeds-54462.html)

Notification of poisonings

[https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/poisoning\\_reports\\_according\\_to\\_the\\_national\\_chemicals\\_act\\_and\\_the\\_poison\\_information\\_regulation-10143.html](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/poisoning_reports_according_to_the_national_chemicals_act_and_the_poison_information_regulation-10143.html)

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