



Ref 27 v 7

BASIC DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Many aspects of modern life can cause problems in the digestive system. External conditions such as travel, separation, storms, diet change, etc., can cause anxiety or stress that may result in digestive problems. Within the body advanced age, strenuous exercise, illness, a processed diet, genetic factors, parasites, medical treatments, and antibiotic use will all have a negative effect on your pet's digestive health.

SYMPTOMS OF POOR DIGESTIVE HEALTH

- Excessive shedding & itching, skin odor
- Weak immune system
- Flatulence & bloating
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Allergies
- Bad Breath
- Weight issues
- Hairballs

Often pet owners are told that their pet's digestive weakness is normal. If not cared for, a minor digestive weakness can develop into more serious long term health issues. It's important to understand that a majority of your pet's immune system is directly connected to their digestive system, thus digestive problems and immune systems problems are often closely related. We recommend purchasing a bio-energetic sensitivity test by Glacier Peak Holistics from Dexter's to help you ascertain whether food sensitivities are a cause.

Digestive Enzymes

Pets experiencing any of the stressors described above will benefit from supplementation with digestive enzymes. Overall, pets eating highly-processed diets (dry and canned food processing kills naturally occurring enzymes), and elderly or sick pets should always be on digestive enzymes. Plant-based enzymes maintain their stability in a very wide pH range, which makes them the most effective choice no matter what the health of your pet's digestive system is. The four key enzymes for dogs and cats are:

- **Protease** for Muscle - Provides protein digestion in the stomach and small intestine to build muscle
- **Amylase** for Energy - Digests starchy foods to release simple sugars for energy.
- **Cellulase** for Fiber - Provides dogs and cats with the enzyme to digest cellulose, reducing the bulking effect of fibrous foods.
- **Lipase** for Overall Health - Digests fatty acids allowing the pet to absorb Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Vitamins A, D, E and K .

DEXTER SUGGESTS



Any time you start a new supplement, it's a good idea to give your pet's body time to adjust.

Give half the recommended dose for the first 4-6 days, then go to the full amount.

Prebiotics/Probiotics

The other important tool in the natural digestive health toolbox is beneficial bacteria. A dog or cat's digestive system is home to hundreds of different species of both beneficial and potentially harmful bacteria. These intestinal bacteria exist in a delicate balance that influence the way your pet digests food and absorbs nutrients.

These naturally-occurring beneficial bacteria ("probiotics") play a critical role in many



PRODUCTS

- Glacier Peak Holistics Pet Wellness Life Stress Scan

- Answers Goat Milk
- Answers Kefir
- Primal Goat Milk

Shelf-Stable Probiotics

- Animal Essentials Plant Enzymes & Probiotics
- Pet Wellness Blends Pet Probiotic & Digestive Enzyme Formula
- Herbsmith MicroFlora Plus
- The Honest Kitchen Pro Bloom

Refrigerated Probiotics

- Jarrow Petdophilus
- Metagenics Ultra-Flora

Soothing Herbals

- The Honest Kitchen Perfect Form
- Animal Essentials Colon Support
- Pet Wellness Blends G.I. Soothe Elixir
- Glacier Peak Holistics Inflation

DEXTER SUGGESTS



An otherwise healthy dog experiencing surgery or other short-term set-back will probably be fine with one month of use.

Animals with long-term problems need to use these supplements for at least several months, perhaps years.

aspects of your pet's immune response. They help to resist infection, and keep the potentially harmful bacteria at bay by helping control their population. They also fight toxins and other internal stresses that can threaten a pet's health. Animals that seem to have unexplained intestinal problems may have an imbalance of bacteria in their gut. Antibiotics also kill beneficial bacteria, contributing to an imbalance. Supplementing your pet's diet to increase the level of beneficial bacteria in the gut is an important way to improve digestion and the immune system.

Prebiotics and probiotics are not the same thing

- **Probiotic:** live beneficial microorganism (including bacteria). Not stable at higher temperatures, so only add into your pet's food right before feeding.
- **Prebiotic:** non-digestible plant-derived food ingredient that stimulates the growth of beneficial bacteria (probiotics) in the digestive system. Often listed are fructooligosaccharides (FOS). They do not require refrigeration.

The highest concentration of probiotics will be in refrigerated or frozen products. Cultured raw dairy foods will also contain naturally-occurring enzymes (see our handout on *Probiotic Foods* for more information). Shelf-stable products are more limited in concentration and variety but have been designed to be active until used, and are demonstrably useful.

Soothing Herbal Formulas

These are helpful for pets with a history of recurring inflammatory symptoms such as diarrhea, constipation, or vomiting (when dangerous causes have been ruled out), or dogs that have trouble changing foods. They help soothe the entire digestive tract, and help relieve symptoms while you are giving probiotics to help restore a good balance of in the gut.

How Do I Use Them?

It can be confusing when there are a variety of products to choose from. Here are our general recommendations for some common scenarios. Use good judgment for your specific animal, or work with a holistic vet or non-vet practitioner.

Feeding Dry or Canned Food Diet with No Signs of Ill Health

- Shelf-Stable Probiotic/Enzyme Product
OR
- Answers Goat Milk, Kefir, or Primal Goat Milk

Feeding Dry, Canned, or Fresh Food Diet with Signs of General Health Imbalance

- Shelf-Stable Probiotic/Enzyme Product
OR
- Answers Goat Milk, Kefir, or Primal Goat Milk

Feeding Dry, Canned, or Fresh Food Diet with Symptoms of Digestive Distress

- Shelf-Stable Probiotic/Enzyme Product, Refrigerated Probiotic
AND
- Soothing Herbal Product

After Antibiotic Use or Surgery, or with Serious Digestive or Immune Problems

- Refrigerated Probiotic