

DEXTER'S DELI

PET HEALTH GUIDE

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BASIC DIGESTIVE HEALTH

SYMPTOMS

- Excessive Shedding, Skin Odor, Itching
- Bad Breath
- Weak Immune System
- Flatulence & Bloating
- Diarrhea or Constipation
- Hairballs
- Weight Issues

Product Suggestions

- Four Leaf Rover Colostrum

Simple Probiotic/enzyme

- Animal Essentials Plant Enzymes & Probiotics
- Sustenance Herbs Pet Probiotic & Digestive Enzyme Blend
- Herbsmith MicroFlora Plus
- Four Leaf Rover Protect

Whole food supplement w/ probiotics/enzymes

- Sustenance Herbs Canine Wellness Blend
- Green Mush
- Nupro Gold

High-Count Probiotics

- Four Leaf Rover Bifido for Fido

Soothing Herbals

- Animal Essentials Colon Support
- Sustenance Herbs G.I. Soothe Elixir
- The Honest Kitchen Perfect Form
- Four Leaf Rover Gut Guard

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. Flagyl, often used to treat digestive problems, can decimate the microbiome of the gut, creating more problems.

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 may be closely related. Chronic systemic yeast can also cause digestive problems. You can get your pet's microbiome analyzed through animalbiome.com.

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.

Prebiotics/Probiotics

The other important tool in the natural digestive health toolbox is probiotics. 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.

Probiotics play a critical role in many aspects of your pet's immune response. They help to resist infection, and keep 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 (only Sac-

CARLSBAD
DEL MAR
NORTH PARK

760-720-7507
858-792-3707
619-738-8677

2508 El Camino Real
1229 Camino Del Mar
3773 30th St



dextersdeli.com

Learn More

animalbiome.com

Check out these books:

- *Dr. Pitcairn's Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats*
- *The New Holistic Way for Dogs & Cats*
- *See Spot Live Longer*
- *Whole Health for Happy Cats*

Saccharomyces boulardii is shown to survive antibiotics, making it an important supplement). 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 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 targeted supplements. Look for a wide variety, designed for dogs and cats, with preference to products that include *Saccharomyces boulardii*. Cultured raw dairy foods will also contain naturally-occurring enzymes (see our handout on *Probiotic Foods* for more information).

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

- Whole food supplement with probiotics/enzymes
alternating with:
- Answers Goat Milk, Kefir, or Primal Goat Milk

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

- Whole food supplement with probiotics/enzymes
AND
- Answers Goat Milk, Kefir, or Primal Goat Milk

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

- Basic Probiotic/Enzyme Product, High-Count Probiotic
AND
- Soothing Herbal Product

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

- High-Count Probiotic
AND
- Specially Chosen Supplements For Specific Issues

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.

