

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR DOG'S POOP

(AND HOW IT AFFECTS THEIR JOINTS)





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A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a brown and white dog, possibly a Border Collie, running on a sandy beach. The dog is looking towards the right with its mouth open, showing its teeth and tongue, appearing happy. The background shows a beach and a blue sky with light clouds.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT YOUR DOG'S POOP SAYS ABOUT THEIR HEALTH

It's not something that people probably like to talk about... but did you know that your dog's poop can give you a wealth of information about their overall health?

Obviously, inspecting your dog's poop is neither pleasant OR a substitute for visiting a veterinarian but there are some key things that your dog's excretory system can tell us about what's going on inside their body.

And it gives us information about how we can fix it!

All good health and wellness starts in the gut. The Chinese have known this for thousands of years and much of holistic medicine (which we're a proponent of) is based around this truth.

If you can get your “insides” healthy then it will impact the health of your “outsides” and improve the visible symptoms and signs of health issues.

An unhealthy gut and digestive system in your dog is not something you can visibly see but things like diarrhea, constipation, strange colored poop or unusual consistency are all tell-tale signs that your dog's insides are struggling.

This is an important health concern to address since it has many domino-effect like repercussions if left unchecked. An unhealthy gut is responsible for a host of issues from chronic pain to skin issues to diseases and cancer.

In the following chapters we'll talk about how gut health is even related to joint mobility, how to identify if your dog's poop is unhealthy and their gut is suffering and what you can do about it!

CHAPTER 2

HOW YOUR DOG'S POOP IS RELATED TO THEIR JOINT HEALTH



Recently, almost everyone has heard about the importance of gut health knows about the key role it plays in overall health and wellbeing.

But just **how** is gut health related to joint health?

Gut health is not only directly linked to allergies, immunity, skin problems and overall health, but the gut's relationship to inflammation which impacts mobility and joint pain cannot be overlooked.

How is my dog's gut health impacting arthritis and joint pain?

According to the Arthritis Foundation, for joint stiffness caused by inflammation or “an inflammatory type of arthritis... the beneficial bacteria [in probiotics] appear to have an impact on inflammation by reducing common biomarkers of inflammation including C-reactive protein.”

What does this mean exactly?

Well, it means the inverse is true. When there is BAD bacteria dominating your dog's gut it not only means things like constipation, diarrhea or unhealthy poop and digestion, but also indicates a “leaky” gut.

A leaky gut means the walls of your dog's intestines have become permeable allowing toxins to leak out into your dog's blood stream.

A permeable intestinal tract (created by things like sickness, antibiotics and an unhealthy diet) allows

certain “bad” bacteria to seep out of the gut and into the bloodstream which triggers an inflammatory response in your dog’s body.

This inflammatory response caused by an unhealthy “leaky gut” can be responsible for chronic pain, immobility, skin issues (i.e hotspots), allergies, chronic sickness or infections ...and yes, joint issues and immobility.

If your dog has unhealthy poop it can indicate an issue with their gut health which has spillover effects and can be exacerbating their hip and joint issues.





CHAPTER 3

COLOR WHEEL

OF POOP

Observing your dog's poop – and any changes to it – can tell you a lot about the condition of their gut health. Of course there are times when your dog will get into food they're not supposed to and have a day or two of different looking poop as their body works the harmful food or substance out of their systems.

However, if you notice any of the below signs or indications in their poop for several days there could be something more serious at play.

Poor gut health is something that can be easily addressed (which we'll talk about more later) so if you notice something is off don't hesitate to act

to improve your dog's quality of life and almost every other area of their health!

Poop that looks more like little rocks and comes out hard and in small pieces could be a sign of constipation. And diarrhea could be a sign that your dog's body isn't processing their food properly due to an unhealthy gut system. We discuss both in more detail in the following chapters.

THE COLOR WHEEL OF DOG POOP



If you notice any color beyond chocolate brown poop for your pup please consult with your veterinarian right away.

PETHONESTY

WHAT CAUSES DIARRHEA IN DOGS

There are a number of reasons why your dog (and you) may be experiencing the unpleasantness of diarrhea.

1 Food Faux Pas

Arguably the number one cause of diarrhea in dogs is eating something that doesn't agree with their tummy. This cause can manifest in a number of different ways.

1. **Eating spoiled food** (We see you garbage can bandits out there!)
2. **Swallowing a non-food item or foreign body** (socks are popular)
3. **Consuming too much food**
4. **Eating human food that is toxic to dogs** (Chocolate's got some unsavory friends)

As tempting as it is to give in to your dogs adorable begging eyes, resist the urge! Their tummies (and your floors) will thank you for it later.

2 Sudden Changes in Diet

Sometimes in a pinch, you accidentally grab the wrong dog food at the store. While this may seem like an innocent mistake, sudden changes in your dog's diet can actually cause gastrointestinal distress.

It can often take several days for your dog's stomach to adjust to the protein structure of new food. Therefore, veterinarians recommend incrementally mixing the new food in with the old food over the course of two to three days.

3 Allergies and Intolerances

If diarrhea is accompanied by additional symptoms such as itchiness, ear inflammation, and licking of the feet, food allergies may be the issue.

Most dogs develop their food allergies and intolerances within their first one to five years.

Common canine food allergens include wheat, egg, beef, dairy, lamb, chicken, fish, pork, and rabbit. Furthermore, dogs can be allergic to prescription medications and antibiotics. Be sure to always monitor your dog after introducing any new food, medicine, or supplement.

4 Emotional Distress

Dogs are very loving and sensitive creatures. So much so that certain emotional stress can cause gastrointestinal upset.

To illustrate, moving is a very emotionally taxing event for a dog. Take care when adjusting your dog to any new environment, especially a new home.

5 Parasites

Roundworms and ringworms and hookworms oh my! Let's just say, the creatures in *The Wizard of Oz* ain't got nothing on the terrors of intestinal parasites.

In addition to the three aforementioned worms, whipworms, tapeworms, *Giardia*, *Spirochetes*, and

Coccidia can all become unwelcome guests in your dog's intestines. Naturally, diarrhea is a side-effect of hosting intestinal parasites.

6 Consuming Toxic Substances

Try as you might, you cannot puppy proof the entire world. Sometimes your sweet dog will lick, or even eat, a toxic plant or substance.

In your home, be sure to lock all cleaning chemicals and potentially toxic substances high and far away from prying puppy paws.

7 Infections and Viruses

On the more serious side, diarrhea can occasionally be an indicator of infection. Such as:

- 1. Distemper**
- 2. Parvovirus**
- 3. Coronavirus**
- 4. Salmonella (Bacterial)**

These type of infections are more common in puppies and younger dogs. Be sure to get your dog

up to date on all of their vaccinations to help prevent viral and bacterial infections.

8 Unhealthy gut

If your dog has an unhealthy gut it's likely their food isn't being properly digested. This can lead to diarrhea and poor absorption of nutrients which perpetuates the poor gut health and diarrhea cycle.



A golden retriever dog is lying on a bright yellow sofa. The dog is looking towards the right side of the frame. The sofa has several yellow pillows. The background is a plain white wall. The floor is covered with a light-colored, textured rug.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT CAUSES CONSTIPATION IN DOGS

Constipation is uncomfortable regardless of your species, but it can be especially frightening for your dog. This condition, wherein your dog is unable to pass regular stool, is, painful and confusing for him. If a dog becomes constipated, the feeling can cause him to become sick with anxiety, so it is wise to take preventative measures to avoid the onset of constipation. Giving your pup a daily **dog digestive supplement** can help tremendously in keeping him regular and healthy. If you are wondering, “What can I give my dog for constipation?” this article is for you.

Here are five dog constipation remedies that could help to get him back into a regular cycle.

What is constipation?

Medically speaking, constipation is described as the insufficient passage of stool. Constipation does not always mean there is a build-up of stool. PetMD says the sensation is characterized by an inability to go despite the feeling or need. As an owner, sometimes it is hard to identify any dog constipation symptoms, however, you will notice that your canine is uncomfortable while trying to go to the bathroom. There are three distinct types of canine constipation:

- 1. Intrinsic Constipation** – characterized by neurological disorders or hormone imbalances in the body leading to constipation
- 2. Intraluminal Constipation** – occurs as the result of a blockage in the colon that prevents the passage of stool
- 3. Extraluminal Constipation** – refers to the blockage of the colon due to an exterior source

How did my dog become constipated?

There are several potential causes of constipation that all fall into one of the medical types of

constipation listed above. The most common is intraluminal constipation wherein a foreign object like a tumor or swallowed object is blocking the colon from the inside. The majority of canines who experience constipation experience intraluminal constipation whereby something he ate becomes lodge in the colon until it can be passed. More often than not, the blockage in your dog's digestive system is something like grass, string, or hair and can eventually be passed. In rare circumstances, the obstruction must be removed through surgery or broken up with an enema.

The exterior blockage alluded to in the description of extraluminal constipation is not always visible. Sometimes it can be something as simple as a matted clump of hair that is blocking the anus, but in other situations, there is something within the body, like a broken bone or arthritis, that is affection regularity for outside the colon itself.

Intrinsic constipation is rare and is usually found as a side effect of medication being taken by your dog. While neurological disorders have the rare ability to manifest as constipation, more than likely intrinsic constipation will be an anticipated result of a medical procedure or something similar.

According to AvoDerm, some of the most **common causes of constipation** are as follows:

- Neurological disease
- Lack of exercise
- Poor gut health
- Intestinal obstructions
- Colon related disease
- Anxiety and stress
- Arthritis and other physical ailments
- Change in diet
- Dehydration
- Side effects of medicine and supplements
- Matted fur
- Damage to the exterior of the anus or anal cavity

How do I know if my dog is constipated?

Before constipation can be treated, it must be appropriately identified. Keep an eye out for any dog constipation symptoms if you suspect your furry friend is suffering from a **canine digestive issue**.

If your dog is regular, and frequently passes stool that is similar in size and consistency, it will be easy to tell if he is constipated. VCA Hospitals lists **warning signs of constipation** as:

- Small, hard, and dry stools
- Foreign objects in the stool like hair, or grass
- Unwillingness to eat
- Vomiting
- Gnawing or biting at the tail
- Licking the anus
- Difficulty urinating

Additionally, your dog may show signs of constipation by dragging his hindquarters along the floor. This motion, colloquially known as “scooting,” is your dog’s attempt to alleviate the pressure he feels in his anus. You can help alleviate pressure by gently rubbing his intestines in the area where his hip joints meet his lower abdomen. If your dog growls, snarls, winces or whines while you are touching his lower abdomen, stop what you are doing immediately and call your veterinarian for an appointment.



A sensitive abdomen could mean a potential blockage or other serious medical problem that requires immediate veterinary care. The most important thing when dealing with constipation is to keep your dog calm, as the last thing you want to do is cause your dog any more pain than he is already experiencing.

Sometimes a gentle abdomen massage is enough to loosen stool, but if your dog is showing signs of pain during your attempt, or if no result takes place, then these five remedies will help get the job done.



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR DOG'S DIGESTIVE HEALTH



Good digestive habits are an imperative part of your dog's continued long term health. Plenty of exercise, high-quality food, and regular check-ups at the vet are all essential practices in making sure your dog is as healthy as possible. But what about supplementing your dog's health routine with a **dog digestive supplement**? Are there products that could be helping your dog to maintain a healthier digestive system from the inside?

Maybe you have been taking supplements for your own health, or perhaps a friend has recently been in your ear about their dog's new dietary addition, regardless of why it has been brought to your

attention, digestive supplements can make a major difference in your dog's digestive system.

There are two main types of digestive supplements you should know about. Digestive enzymes and probiotics are both categorized as digestive supplements and both function to give your dog a happier and healthier digestive tract.

If you have been tempted to try digestive supplements for your dog, it is vital that you know what you're purchasing. One quick Google search will yield countless positive health stories where success is attributed to either probiotics or digestive enzymes. To make the best possible decision for your pet, you should always rely on your own research, and more importantly, the counsel of your dog's veterinarian. While you do have the final say about what you give or don't give to your dog, your vet's advice should be weighted heavily in your decision making.

If you are interested in learning how digestive enzymes and probiotics can help to benefit your dog's health, the following article will give you a solid understanding of what each supplement does and the differences between the two.

To understand how supplemental enzymes and probiotics affect a dog, we must first understand what each supplement does and how they differ from one another.

What Are Digestive Enzymes for a Dog's Digestion?

Based on the findings of Doggy Digest, a digestive enzyme is any protein that helps to break down food to aid digestion. This is not the same kind of protein that is in the food your dog eats, but rather a specific chemical produced by the body that interacts with food. When food initially reaches your dog's stomach, it is still in relatively large chunks and pieces. Generally speaking, it can take up to 12 hours for a dog to digest his food, but this may depend slightly on his age and weight. Food must then be broken down and digested so nutrients can be absorbed by the body.

Your dog's body naturally does this process through the use of stomach acid and other natural enzymes that help to break the food down. The idea behind supplemental digestive enzymes for dogs is that these additives work with your canines's

biologically-produced enzymes to help break down food at a faster rate. As a result of these supplements, your dog's digestive system doesn't have to work as hard, allowing for easier digestion and less gastrointestinal issues like diarrhea, indigestion, loose stools, and other problems.

Where Do Digestive Enzymes Come From?

Digestive enzymes are created by the pancreas, which is responsible for producing and regulating the proteins that aid in digestion. There are three major digestive enzymes that your dog produces naturally to aid in the digestion process:

- **Amylase** – the enzyme responsible for breaking down carbohydrates
- **Lipase** – the enzyme responsible for breaking down fat
- **Protease** – the enzyme responsible for breaking down protein

According to the Cummings Veterinary Medical Center, these natural digestive enzymes do most of their work in the stomach. As this acid fills

within the stomach, digestive enzymes are secreted through the lining of the pancreas where they begin to break down food for further absorption. In contrast, the digestive supplemental enzymes that your dog would take orally are activated once the digestion process has started.

What Is a Probiotic?

Your body is covered with these single-celled organisms that help keep you healthy and clean. Your dog is no different. You've probably heard that a dog's mouth is cleaner than a human's mouth; well, this is due to the wide variety of healthy bacteria dogs have living within their mouth.

A probiotic is a supplement that simply introduces more of these healthy bacteria into your dog's body. Probiotics are found in a number of fermented foods and are often attributed to eradicating the body of germs. Think of probiotics as a cleanup crew for your dog's intestinal tract. The microorganisms that live in your dog's GI tract are there to support the muscle tissue and keep everything clean.

Probiotics help stimulate cell growth, aid in immune health, and increasing the production of vital

nutrients. Doses of probiotics often come in small capsules or powders and help to introduce billions of helpful microorganisms to the body.

Wouldn't These Healthy Bacteria Disrupt What's Already Going On in My Dog's Gut?

Not necessarily. Bacteria are really good at fitting in, and what's more, they are even better at falling into line and taking on jobs that your natural bacteria won't... like cleaning. The healthy bacteria that are alive in your dog's gut are continually scouring the inner workings of your dog's digestive tract. These bacteria don't have as much to do with breaking down food as much as they are there to support the tissues within your dog's body and keep them healthy and active.

Major Differences Between Digestive Enzymes vs. Probiotics

Both probiotics and digestive enzymes for dogs claim to aid the digestive system, but they each do it in a radically different way. As we know, digestive

enzymes are proteins that help breakdown food, aiding the body by making the food easier to digest. Probiotics provide stimulus and support to the tissue and organs working to absorb that food.

Imagine that probiotics and digestive enzymes are both professional masseuses. The enzymes massage the food, softening it for digestion, while probiotics massage the muscle tissue preparing the organs for the hard work that goes into the digestion process. Both claim to aid in the digestion process actively, but one does it by preparing the food, and the other does it by preparing the body.

The second way **probiotics and digestive enzymes differ** is in their lasting effect on the body. Dog digestive enzymes have no lasting impact on the body and do not play a part in promoting long term health. Once the body uses the digestive enzymes that your dog took orally, those enzymes dissipate and become part of the nutrients that your dog absorbs.

Probiotics, on the other hand, have a little bit more to do with long term health. Keeping your dog's gut in good health is a great way to keep him healthy

overall, especially if your pup suffers from a sensitive stomach, diarrhea, or any other type of common dog digestive issues. The collection of bacteria that make up probiotics don't live forever. But, the short term presence of these microorganisms helps to stimulate other live bacteria in the gut which can then reproduce and thrive, keeping your dog healthy and happy on a long term basis.



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