

Ask Deb – What are Enzymes and Probiotics and why should I add them to my pet's food?

This is one of the most common questions we receive. These supplements, and the difference between them, can be a bit confusing if you are not familiar with what they are and how they each work to improve your pet's wellness.

Digestive enzymes are essential for proper digestion and here's why: dry pet food (kibble), from the least expensive to the very best available, lacks critical enzymes needed for proper digestion, in part because it must be cooked at such a high temperature to ensure its shelf life and effectively kill all bacteria - the good as well as the bad.

When digestion is compromised, it creates the perfect environment for yeast to thrive, which is the primary culprit for itching, scratching, and chewing. This lack of enzymes can even contribute to bad breath and gum disease. For raw-fed pets, digestive enzymes are critical for the digestion of the raw vegetables in their diets. Even in cases such as this, where the food has not been cooked, canines simply do not produce the proper enzymes to digest vegetables in any form, but starches in particular.

You have likely heard of probiotics and are familiar with how they aid digestion and provide a healthy intestinal environment. They are like little "good bacteria" superheroes, fighting to protect your pet from the "bad bacteria" villains. They help with coat and skin problems and work to prevent and correct yeast and candida imbalances. They even help balance stool production and reduce gas (yay!).

We offer and recommend Digest Basic and Pro-Bio, both manufactured by Enzymedica for human use. You might wonder why we prefer a human product to the many enzymes and probiotics designed specifically for pet use. I have found that these products are the simplest, most effective ones available without unnecessary additives, fillers or binders, including yeast.

They're also a good value and the ideal dose for pets. For the Pro-Bio, just give one a day. Simply open the capsule and pour it over the food. For the average 50 lb. dog, you simply give one Digest Basic at each meal, morning and evening. For smaller dogs and cats, divide one Digest Basic between two meals. For very small dogs, give us a call and we can discuss the best dose.