

Digestive Health in Our Pets: The Basis for Happy Healthy Animals

At Murray Avenue Apothecary we love all animals and we believe they have the right to a healthy life.

Digestive disturbances are a very common complaint with our companion animals. A sick pet feels miserable and can affect your whole household, crimping your family's plans and activities. It's worrisome to leave your sick dog or cat behind, but on the other hand you don't want to board or crate your animal, or turn it over to an unknowledgeable caretaker during a bout of diarrhea or other illness.

If you've had a pet with frequent or chronic digestive issues, you know the underlying problem is often difficult to diagnose and can take weeks or even months of trial and error to resolve.

Digestive Upsets Can Signal More Serious Problems

If your dog is passing a lot of foul-smelling gas, or leaving wet-looking poop in your backyard, or if he suffers from regular bouts of diarrhea, it's very possible his intestinal tract is overrun with bad bacteria.

You can usually tell if your cat is having digestive problems by checking the litter box for changes in the consistency or color of her "deposits." Cats with digestive issues will sometimes urinate or defecate outside their boxes.

Often, digestive upsets are the first sign your dog or cat has a larger health problem.



How Gut Bacteria Affects Your Pet's Health

Your pet's digestive tract is the largest immune organ in its body, and believe it or not, your dog or cat has even more bacteria in its intestinal tract than you do. Their digestive tract is designed specifically to handle a tremendous bacterial load -- bacteria which, if found elsewhere in the body, would be considered a life threatening infection.

Your pet's digestive system must stay populated with a healthy level of good bacteria in order to keep the immune system strong. If bad bacteria overwhelms your pet's intestines, your dog or cat can lose its vitality and become more susceptible to illness, not to mention GI symptoms.

Laboratory studies have shown animals raised either without colonies of friendly bacteria in the gut, or who have a poor balance of good-to-bad gut bacteria, are at high risk of developing disease.

Friendly bacteria in the gut helps your pet's body make important B vitamins, maintain a strong immune system, and prevent an overgrowth of harmful bacteria.

How Bad Bugs Take Over

Your pet's good-to-bad gut bacteria ratio can be thrown out of balance by gastrointestinal (GI) stressors which can be either emotional or physiologic -- or both. These stressors can include:

- A sudden change in diet (if your pet has been on the same food for a long time)
- A poor-quality diet
- Strange eating habits (feces, grass, sticks, rocks, etc.)
- Consumption of unclean water (from lakes, ponds or ditches)
- Ingestion of fertilizers, pesticides, or chemicals in the water supply
- Vaccinations
- Antibiotics and/or steroids (cortisone, prednisone)
- Surgery
- GI disease
- Boarding at a kennel or pet hospital
- Travel
- Emotional stress (usually caused by a change in routine)

Antibiotics and steroids like cortisone are the most-prescribed drugs in traditional veterinary practices. Both these drugs can decimate the friendly bacteria in your pet's gut.

When GI stressors upset the balance of good to bad bacteria in your pet's digestive system, it can create a cascade of nutritional and other health problems, including poor food absorption and intermittent or chronic diarrhea.

It also opens the door to leaky gut (dysbiosis), which means your dog or cat can absorb partially digested amino acids

Holistic Care

and allergens into its bloodstream. This in turn can trigger a host of other health problems, from allergies to auto-immune disease.

Probiotics and Veterinary Medicine

Probiotics are good bacteria. They have the ability to re-colonize the digestive tract with friendly bacteria.

Holistic veterinarians have been using them for years on their animal patients to prevent and treat digestive problems and a variety of other health concerns. Traditional veterinarians, however, have, until recently, dismissed probiotics as ineffective and a waste of money.

Then about two years ago, studies began to emerge showing specific strains of probiotics were indeed beneficial for dogs and cats with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), gastritis and colitis (all GI conditions), as well as those suffering the side

effects of antibiotics and steroid drugs. In fact, the overwhelming research conclusion was probiotics are not only effective, but help pets recover from illness faster and with fewer complications.

Probiotics for a Wide Range of Health Concerns

Pet owners who participated in a study to test the effect of probiotics on their dogs and cats suffering from kidney failure reported very positive results.

In pets with mild to moderate kidney disease, there was significant improvement in their conditions. For those animals with more advanced cases of renal failure, their owners reported their pets' conditions stabilized with the probiotic therapy and quality of life was improved. Probiotics are also used frequently in farm animals (poultry, pigs and calves) to prevent certain infections.

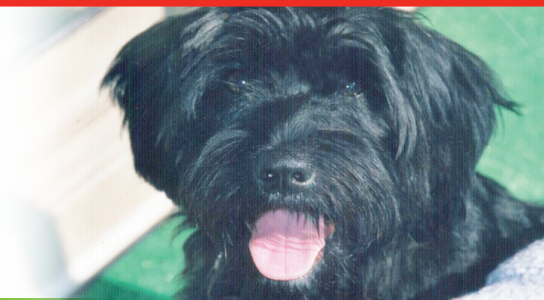
Probiotics show promise in the treatment of pancreatitis in dogs, and may prove beneficial for pets with allergies and other immune-related conditions. We also use a lot of colostrum powder, an inexpensive yet effective treatment for allergies and immunity.

All Probiotic Supplements are Not Created Equal

Probiotic formulas used by humans were developed specifically to fortify the bacterial species found in the human GI tract. Pets have some specific strains of bacteria unique to them, so they need a unique probiotic. Your dog or cat must have organisms derived from its own species for best results.

Tests on commercially available veterinary probiotic supplements have revealed serious quality issues. For example:

- They often don't contain the organisms listed on the label



Keep your pets healthy with MAA Compounds!

Animal Digest Formula

Contains Probiotics & Colostrum

- Gut Immunity
- Digestion
- Allergies

Ralph's Immunity & Inflammation Formula

Contains Acetyl-Glutathione

- Inflammation
- Arthritis
- Asthma

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- They are contaminated with unhealthy bacteria, or have too few live, healthy organisms to be beneficial
- They only contain one or two strains of bacteria beneficial for dogs and cats
- Their viability, potency and purity have not been thoroughly evaluated
-

Another problem -- don't be fooled by commercial pet foods claiming to be "probiotic foods."

The bacteria in a probiotic must be live and able to reproduce in order for it to be beneficial. Tests on dog foods claiming to contain probiotic micro-organisms showed the manufacturing process kills too many of the live bacteria, rendering the probiotic effect useless by the time the food is packaged and shipped.

How to Select a High-Quality Probiotic for Your Pet

As you can see, it can be quite difficult to determine whether the probiotic you've purchased for your companion animal is effective and safe.

A pet probiotic should have the following qualities:

- It must not cause disease (despite the fact it contains bacteria)
- It must contain enough live organisms to colonize the intestines
- It must contain the correct strains of bacteria beneficial for pets.
- It should remain stable under normal storage conditions-we refrigerate all of our probiotics

It should be easy to give to your dog or cat. At the Apothecary we sell probiotics for dogs and cats that can simply be emptied on their food. What a difference probiotics make in the health of our pets!

given another chance at life after using this helpful compound after she was diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease.

Another compound we offer is **Ralph's Immunity & Inflammation** Formula.


It can also be obtained with or without an RX and contains Acetyl-Glutathione, probiotics, and beta-glucan to help with inflammation, arthritis, and asthma.

We also have many different varieties of supplements for your animal ranging from joint and flexibility products to fish oil chews, to tasty multivitamins. We even have calming chews or oral safe capsules called Happy Traveler to help with vet visits, thunderstorms, rides in the car or separation anxiety. And don't forget natural flea remedies and prevention and even shampoo!!

And don't forget to spread the word about our Greyhound Corn and Callus Cream compound for painful corns, calluses and other uncomfortable pad problems your dog may have. We are working with The Ohio State University Veterinary School and Dr. Couto and have submitted preliminary data for a collaborative study. We have already dispensed over 1600 tubes! The results have been outstanding! We are often called upon to come up with novel ideas to get your pet to take its medicine and we are problem solvers in the vet community. We can make topical medicine to be rubbed on your animal's ear flaps and to overcome nasty tasting oral medicine we can prepare a tasty liquid with many different flavors to choose from! We will even give your animal a little sample flavor taste before we make their medicine!

Stop by the Apothecary today and please bring your animal...we always have treats handy for our furry visitors and they always bring a smile to our faces. Let's keep our pets healthy so they can be our companions for many years to come!

Just mention this article or bring it in for a 10% discount on your first animal compound or supplement.

To your pet's health,
Susan Merenstein
Pharmacist/Owner 

At Murray Avenue Apothecary, or **Pittsburgh's Pet Pharmacy** as we are known in the veterinary community, we also compound a product called **Animal Digest Formula**. It can be obtained with or without an RX and contains probiotics, digestive enzymes, and colostrum to help with gut immunity, digestion, and allergies and can be flavored in many tasty flavors for your pet-beef, liver, 3 kinds of chicken, tuna, salmon, peanut butter, and cheese. My own cat Alice was

Judith Levy

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