

CORPOPHAGY (Stool-Eating)

Corpophagy is a common problem in dogs, especially puppies. There are many theories as to why dogs engage in this behavior. Dogs may eat stool because of digestive problems, nutritional deficiencies, boredom or because they seem to enjoy the activity.

Sometimes dogs that are having problems digesting and absorbing their food will become corpophagic. If your dog is having this problem, you should first consult your veterinarian to rule out any medical cause. Discuss your dog's diet with your vet to rule out nutritional deficiency.

Boredom is a common problem in urban dogs. They may have a comfortable life, but generally do not get enough physical and mental stimulation. This most commonly results in behavior problems, such as running away, destructiveness, hyperactivity and other vices (such as corpophagy, tail-chasing, & self-mutilation) including aggression. To combat boredom, take your dog to obedience classes for training and work with your dog for a few minutes everyday. Teach him functional commands and tricks. This will result in a better-behaved dog. You'll then be able to take him places with you, such as friend's homes, pet supply stores, forest preserves & parks, on vacation etc.,

which will further enrich his life and eliminate boredom.

Finally, a dog cannot eat stool that is not there. Picking up after your dog as soon as he defecates is the best way to prevent the problem. Dogs quite frequently eat cat feces from the litterbox. This is because a cat's diet is very high in fat & protein, much of which not absorbed and is eliminated. Scoop out your box daily and situate the litterbox so your dog cannot get to it. If the box is hooded, turn it so the opening is facing a corner, allowing only enough room for your cat to get in and out. Placing it under furniture may also work. Cat "litterbox cabinets" are also available, which hide the box inside a piece of furniture.

You can also try making stool-eating a very unpleasant experience for your dog to discourage the behavior (change the motivation). Sprinkling feces with something that tastes bad, such as tobasco sauce or Bitter Apple, may convince the dog to stop, or it may condition the dog to *like* the taste of tobasco or Bitter Apple.

By following the simple procedures above, you *can* stop a dog from stool-eating. Rule out medical problems, eliminate boredom, prevent access and change the motivation to successfully stop this habit.



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CORPOPHAGY

(Stool eating)
It Happens



A Common Problem
Possible Causes
Are:
Digestive Troubles

Nutritional
Deficiencies

Boredom

Simple Enjoyment