

## **Gut Reaction for Pets!**

Let's fact it, when the subject of poor digestion is mentioned we may think about grandmother when she's had too many turnip greens. Is digestive health something that pet owners really need to address? The answer is an overwhelming yes. Digestive function is one of the most important elements in producing good health, immune function and longevity for your pets.

So how does digestive function figure into the overall health of your pet? First consider that proper nutrition provides the building blocks for every cell within the body. If one food element is out of proportion (not enough, too much) the complex system within the body can be sent awry leading to immediate and long-term ill effects. Short-term effects can be as simple as diarrhea, heartburn, gas etc. Long-term effects are much more chilling – chronic disease, cancer, heart disease etc. In addition, when nutrition is out of balance immune systems suffer, opening the door for increased possibility of succumbing to various pathogens.

Increased awareness on nutrition in general has educated the consumer to understand that providing pets with the right mix of food ingredients will not only help animals to good health, but can also mean fewer trips to the veterinarian. There are many natural wellness pet diets with the proper amount of protein, none of the wrong kinds of grains and no additives. All is well – right? Maybe, maybe not.

Even the best pet commercial diets can't duplicate the perfectly balanced gut bacterial cocktail needed to actually absorb and utilize all of the great ingredients that you purchased. There are trillions of bacteria in the gut and the hoped for scenario is one where the good bacteria can proliferate, dominating the bad bacteria, allowing for optimal absorption of nutrients as well as creating the bacterial balance needed to fight disease. A "natural" diet for an animal is made up of freshly killed whole animal, with a little vegetation thrown in here and there. This fresh meat is delivered as nature intended with all of the bacterial balance, enzymes and fiber, etc that promotes the right digestive environment. To really fill the natural nutritional spectrum every pet owner would need to hunt and kill a rabbit daily and deliver this lovely repast to darling little 2 lb Fifi. Doesn't sound appealing? The fact is commercially prepared dry and wet pet foods are convenient and millions of pet owners will continue to use them. Which leads back to the need for digestive aides, and how adding an overlooked, seemingly innocuous element to pet diets can make a substantial difference.

The right digestive aide works to boost good bacteria, stabilizing the gut environment, promoting nutrient absorption and aiding immune system strength. Most digestive aides incorporate either probiotics or prebiotics. Probiotics are wonderful digestive enhancers but somewhat fragile and often have difficulty surviving heat, cold and the hosts digestive tract. Prebiotics on the other hand can survive under extreme conditions reaching the gut every time and able to do their work of promoting good bacteria production. Probiotic and prebiotic cultures can assist animals with diarrhea, constipation, skin and coat issues, immunity and overall improved health. For many pets, the digestive aide will act as a silent protector, making sure that the animal is receiving

proper nutrition and helping to prevent future nutrition related problems and keeping disease resistance at an optimal level. For other animals which are in a spiral of never ending illnesses, feedings problems, diarrhea, etc., that never seem to be corrected with medications, the digestive aide will be the health rescuer, aiding the animals own body to heal itself. Scientific attention on prebiotics for healthier animals has gained strength over the past decade due to focus on natural and preventive healing, which means digestive aides will gradually become the focus of more interest for consumers.

We spend billions of dollars each year pampering our pets with special treats, holiday costumes, designer carriers and spa quality grooming products because we love them. Adding a digestive aide to a beloved pet's diet for just a few dollars per year can help insure that this object of our affection experiences optimal health, a better immune system and a longer life for their happiness and ours.

Courtesy of the Hillsboro Company  
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