

Stop Your Dog from Eating Feces

Coprophagia is a nasty dog problem that dog owners hate. It does not make sense, as we feed them the best meals possible, and they chose to eat poop. Who figured?

Eating feces issues are most common in puppies. However, it can be seen at any stage throughout a dog's life. For such a wide spread problem there hasn't been much research conducted into how to stop our dogs from eating poop.

The good news is that there are many ways available to correct this nasty habit. Whichever method you try below, be consistent. You must enforce your strategy every time to be successful. This will soon be the new habit.

So, why do dogs eat poop (dog or cat poop)?

Let's break them into two simple areas:

1. Behavioral – It's either a habitual behavioral problem, or
2. Medical – There is an underlying medical issue.

You can easily discount the medical issues by asking your vet to examine your dog. They have a battery of tests that will easily tell them if your dog has a deficiency that is causing them to need to eat feces. Keep your dog well vaccinated, as coprophagia will indeed cause other medical issues as expected from eating parasites resident in feces.

Dogs eat their own poop because of the following reasons:

- If a dog punished for defecating inside the house, he may on occasions eat his poop to "hide the evidence".
- It tastes good to your dog
- Sometimes anxiety causes them to do it – stress
- Sometimes dogs develop this feces eating habit because they are copying the behavior of other dogs.
- Plain old boredom
- Puppies can have a vitamin or mineral deficiency and they eat feces to restore this to the proper balance.
- Mothers with a young litter of pups will eat the puppy's droppings. This is to keep the area clean and also to help conceal the litter from predators.
- Could be that your dog is cleaning up his living area.
- If a dog is over-fed, he may not properly digest his food, therefore his feces smells like his food.
- Dog owners have noted that when changing their dog's diet the dog has developed coprophagia - especially if the change was to a diet high in fat.
- If you only feed once a day, some dogs can become very hungry and scavenge.
- Some dogs have been known to develop this issue when when put on certain medications or antibiotics.

- A dog may eat the feces of a sick dog. This behavior is an attempt to conceal or protect the sick dog from predators.

Let's cut to the chase...

How do we stop 'Rover' from eating feces?

The methods below should help you start the process, but, you will need a consistent approach, as dogs are much more persistent and consistent than their humans (punishment or anger will NOT work – with any behavioral problem).

- Always reward desired behavior.
- As soon as you see your dog in the act of eating or attempting to eat feces, use a distraction such as your “leave-it” command; or throw a toy.
- Feed two to three times per day.
- Feed them a well balanced diet.
- Change their diet. It may not be processing well through their system.
- Always keep your dog's living area clean of feces.
- Always provide busy toys for them to entertain themselves (these are toys that are self feeding).
- Exercise and stimulate your dog - mentally and physically.
- Teach your dog the “leave-it” command. Use it, every time the dog is near his own poop.
- Feed them products that will help their poop taste less appealing, such as:
 - Pineapple, or
 - Pumpkin, or
 - Spinach, or
 - Pickles, or
 - Garlic
- Vets will typically also recommend products such as:
 - Deter®, or
 - Forbid®
- Try lacing your yard poop with Tabasco sauce or cayenne pepper.
- Much success has been reported from people that have sprayed the poop with “Pepper Spray”; although it may get a little costly.
- Some results are shown by muzzling the dog prior to sending him out to do his business. Be ready to clean the muzzle, as he may attempt it anyway.
- Associate a negative experience with the act of eating feces. Use a prong collar or even a shock collar (for stubborn cases) and remotely stimulate the dog if he attempts to eat feces.

Be consistent, most Coprophagia cases are easily solved with these methods listed above.