

My Dog Is Eating Poop!

Dealing with Coprophagia

Has your dog ever eaten feces? This situation can be both shocking and unpleasant for most pet parents. "Coprophagia" is the technical term for eating feces (a.k.a. poop). Fortunately, it's not a very common occurrence. Coprophagia can happen at any stage of development, but it is most common in puppies. Coprophagia should be addressed immediately, as it may be harmful to the dog's health and/or a symptom of other potential serious medical conditions, such as anxiety, nutritional deficiencies, diabetics, gastrointestinal disease, and parasites, to mention just a few.



Here are some steps for dealing with canine coprophagia:

1. Speak to your veterinarian to rule out medical conditions, and to get recommendations for food, vitamins, and nutritional supplements, as well as to address any behavioral concerns.
2. Manage access to feces. Pick up after your dog(s) immediately. Accompany your dog to the yard for potty breaks. Block litter boxes or other access to feces.
3. Prevent your dog from reaching for feces during walks by paying attention to what your dog sniffs and promptly redirecting your dog if there is feces in the area.
4. Teach your dog the "Leave It" command and reward your dog for looking at you when there is poop within your dog's sight.
5. Increase your dog's physical and mental activity.
6. Feed your dog high-quality food.
7. Discuss the use of over-the-counter products that may discourage your dog from eating feces with your veterinarian and/or trainer.

Although watching your dog eat feces can be a disturbing experience, coprophagia can be managed or completely eliminated. Seek the help of your veterinarian or a certified trainer, and be sure to curb your dog's access to feces in its environment for best results.

Written by: Ida DeLeon, BA, CPDT-KA

