

Welcome to our Canine Behavior Section.

Coprophagia

This is formal term for eating feces, whether it belongs to the dog or some other animal. Feces usually contains undigested or semi-digested material which can provide needed nutrients for dogs. Nursing bitches naturally consume their puppies feces to keep the nest clean and perhaps to keep predators from picking up the scent and harming the litter. In any event, what is perfectable acceptable to a canines is quite unacceptable to humans.

Treatment for coprophagia involves several remedies. Feces should be picked up immediately from the yard to remove the opportunity to consume it. Training your dog to defecate on command (see House Training) will assist you with this. Bored dogs who are inactive or alone for long periods can become coprophagic. Exercise and stimulation are called for in these cases. Some veterinarians have suggested that the behavior may be cause by a deficiency of B vitamins and vitamin K which can be found in feces. Meaty diets often times result in aromatic stools so dry kibble is recommended. All such dogs should be fed a consistent, balanced diet in two or three short meals a day. Treating the pre-eaten food with monosodium glutamate (Accent) is said to make the stool undesirable. I have gotten mixed feedback on this practice.

Simple aversion therapy can be done by letting the dog approach the stool on a long lead. If he starts sniffing it, give a strong leash check. If he passes by, praise him.