

# DEXTER'S DELI

## PET HEALTH GUIDE

Ref. 27 v.15



# BASIC DIGESTIVE HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

- Excessive Shedding, Skin Odor, Itching
- Bad Breath
- Weak Immune System
- Flatulence & Bloating
- Diarrhea or Constipation
- Hairballs
- Weight Issues

## Product Suggestions

### Whole Food Supplement with Probiotics & Enzymes

- Sustenance Herbs CWB Daily
- Real Mushroom Daily Dawg & Functional Feline
- Four Leaf Rover Kibble Fixer
- Nupro Gold
- Sustenance Herbs Immune Mushroom+

### Mixed probiotic/enzyme

- Animal Essentials Plant Enzymes & Probiotics
- Sustenance Herbs Pet Probiotic & Digestive Enzyme Blend
- Herbsmith MicroFlora Plus
- Four Leaf Rover Digest

### High-Count, High-Diversity Probiotic with prebiotic

- Green Juju Probiotics (Soil, Farm, & Leaf)
- Four Leaf Rover Bifido for Fido

### Probiotic with prebiotic for use during/after antibiotics

- Four Leaf Rover Saccharomyces boulardii

**Many aspects of modern life can cause problems in the digestive system.** Not only diet changes, but anxiety and stress can result in digestive problems. Advanced age, strenuous exercise, illness, a processed diet, genetic factors, parasites, exposure to herbicides/pesticides, medical treatments, and antibiotic use can all have a negative effect on your pet's digestive health. Metronidazole, often used to treat digestive problems, can decimate the microbiome of the gut, creating new problems. Pets born via c-section are also more prone to problems from inadequate microbiome "seeding" at birth.

**Often pet owners are told that their pet's digestive weakness is normal.** If not cared for a minor digestive weakness can develop in to more serious long term health issues. It's important to understand that a majority of your pet's immune system is directly connected to their digestive system, thus digestive problems and immune systems problems may be closely related (behavior too!). Chronic systemic yeast can also cause digestive problems. You can get your pet's microbiome analyzed through [animalbiome.com](http://animalbiome.com).

### Digestive Enzymes

Pets eating highly-processed diets (dry and canned food) need enzymes to make up for the lack of them in the food. Elderly and sick pets should be given digestive enzymes because they may not be able to produce sufficient amounts. Supplements made with plant-based enzymes maintain their stability in a wide pH range, making them the most reliable choice.

The four key enzymes for dogs and cats are: **Protease** provides protein digestion in the stomach and small intestine to build muscle. Most often supplied in the form of bromelain or papain. **Amylase** digests starchy foods to release simple sugars for energy. **Cellulase** breaks down cellulose found in fibrous plant foods. **Lipase** breaks down fatty acids allowing the pet to absorb Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Vitamins A, D, E and K.

### Prebiotics/Probiotics

The other important tool in the natural digestive health toolbox is probiotics. A dog or cat's digestive system is home to hundreds of different species of both beneficial and potentially harmful bacteria. These intestinal bacteria exist in a delicate balance that influence the way your pet digests food and absorb nutrients. This microbiome is a key component to health.

**Probiotics play a critical role in many aspects of your pet's immune response.** They help to resist infection, and keep potentially harmful bacteria at bay by helping control their population. They also fight toxins and other internal stresses that can threaten a pet's health. Animals that seem to have unexplained intestinal problems may have an imbalance of bacteria in their gut. Antibiotics also kill most beneficial bacteria, contributing to an imbalance. Supplementing your pet's diet to increase the level and, most importantly, the diversity of beneficial bacteria in the gut is an important way to improve digestion and the immune system.

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## Learn More

**animalbiome.com**  
*analysis and advice on  
your dog's microbiome*

### Check out our other Pet Health Guides

- **Probiotic Foods**
- *IBS/Colitis*

## Product Suggestions

### Soothing Herbals

- Animal Essentials Colon Support
- Sustenance Herbs G.I. Soothe Elixir
- The Honest Kitchen Perfect Form
- Four Leaf Rover Gut Guard
- Ziggy Marley Apawthecary Romeo's Digestion Powder

**If giving probiotics during antibiotic use:** *Wait two hours after the antibiotic is given before giving the probiotic. Try to mix with as little food as possible for improved effectiveness. Be sure the probiotic product you're giving includes *Saccharomyces boulardii*, which survives antibiotics, doesn't over-compete with other probiotics trying to repopulate, allows diversity.*

*An otherwise healthy dog experiencing surgery or other short-term set-back will probably be fine with one month of use.*

*Animals with long-term problems need to use these supplements for several months or more.*



## Prebiotics and probiotics are not the same thing

**Probiotics** are live beneficial microorganisms that when administered in adequate amounts provide a benefit for the animal. The variety is endless, and some that naturally occur in the body are not the same as what are in supplements. Not all probiotics require refrigeration so don't assume shelf-stable supplements are less effective. All probiotic powders will come with some kind of carrier, usually plant-based. The highest concentration of probiotics will be in supplements, while probiotic foods are wonderful for maintenance.

**Prebiotics** are plant-derived fiber that feed the probiotics in the digestive system. Often listed are fructooligosaccharides (FOS), larch, or inulin. Adding a diversity of plant ingredients and medicinal mushrooms to your pet's food sustains a diversity of probiotics.

**Some plant-based fiber *must* be included in the diet to support probiotics in the body, otherwise they will just pass through because they have nothing to eat.**

**The highest concentration of probiotics will be in targeted supplements.** Notice if there is a wide variety of strains and match to your needs. Cultured and/or fermented raw foods, both dairy and plant-based, are another source of enzymes and probiotics and are best used for maintaining good health. (see our handout on *Probiotic Foods* for more information)

### Soothing Herbal Formulas

These are very helpful for pets with a history of recurring inflammatory symptoms such as diarrhea, constipation, or vomiting (when dangerous causes have been ruled out), or dogs that have trouble changing foods. They help soothe the entire digestive tract, and help relieve symptoms while you are giving probiotics to help restore a good balance of in the gut.

### How Do I Use Them?

It can be confusing when there are a variety of products to choose from. Here are our general recommendations to get you started. Always Start Low & Go Slow when introducing new supplements.

#### Feeding Dry or Canned Food with No Signs of Ill Health

- Whole food supplement with probiotics/enzymes  
ALTERNATING WITH:
- Probiotic foods (such as Green Juju fermented toppers)

#### Feeding Dry, Canned, or Fresh Food with Signs of a General Health Imbalance

- Whole food supplement with probiotics/enzymes  
AND:
- Probiotic foods (such as Green Juju fermented toppers)

#### Feeding Dry, Canned, or Fresh Food Diet with Symptoms of Digestive Distress

- Mixed Probiotic/Enzyme Product, possibly High-Count/High-Diversity Probiotic  
AND:
- Soothing Herbal Product

#### During and After Antibiotic Use

- *Saccharomyces boulardii* followed up with Probiotic Foods

#### Chronic Gut, Immune, or Organ Problems

- High-Count/High-Diversity Probiotic  
AND:
- Specially Chosen Supplements For Specific Issues