



Honey's Canine Health Guide N°4

CONSTIPATION

By Dr Lise Hansen

Dr Lise Hansen DVM MRCVS CertIAVH PCH is qualified as a veterinary surgeon and a homeopath. She has also undertaken training in acupuncture for animals.

Contents

- Overview
- Treating constipation
- The role of diet
- Free expert advice
- Free book
- General information about raw feeding

Overview

What is constipation?

Constipation refers to infrequent or difficult bowel movements. It can happen for multiple reasons ranging from dietary problems to dehydration or disease.

Constipation doesn't tend to be a big problem in dogs. Problems such as an enlarged prostate or blocked anal sacs can make bowel movements painful or difficult, however, so always consult a vet if your dog is having problems pooing. Changes in diet, such as the feeding of raw bone, can cause temporary constipation. As long as your dog isn't vomiting, remains bright and alert, and the constipation lasts no more than a day or two, there is rarely a need for further action.

Be aware that constipation can easily be confused with obstruction of the urethra, which is a much more serious problem. If your dog is restless and constantly squatting and straining, they may be having trouble passing urine rather than stool. While constipation is rarely an emergency, urinary obstruction is one of the few truly life-threatening emergencies for which treatment cannot be delayed even for a few hours. If in doubt, always consult a vet immediately.

Treating constipation

The first step is to establish the cause of the problem.

In cases where constipation is secondary to physical illness, this must be diagnosed and treated.

When constipation is caused by behavioural issues, these must be identified and the necessary changes made to the environment.

Whatever the reason behind your animal's constipation, it always makes sense to avoid dry food and try to increase his or her water intake. Good hydration will always help relieve constipation.

Together with the steps described above, acupuncture and homeopathy may be able to improve digestion and can make a difference in some cases.

Osteopathy is always worthwhile for animals with a tendency to constipation. Whether the problem was caused by, or has resulted in tension in the pelvic area, osteopathy can help.

The role of diet

There is some debate about the best way to feed an animal with a tendency to constipation. Some experts suggest that added fibre is the best option and recommend special high-fibre diets, while others believe that dry food is part of the problem and should be avoided completely.

The first step is to focus on hydration. It does not make sense to feed a constipated animal dehydrated food (even if it is high in fibre). Stop all dry food and instead switch to a raw meat and bone diet. If extra fibre is needed, a teaspoon of psyllium husks or another dietary fibre supplement can easily be mixed in.

Switching to a raw diet that contains high levels of natural moisture, and insoluble fibre can significantly improve matters. Adding extra water to the food can improve hydration. Fibre can be provided by including vegetables – root vegetables tend to firm stools while green leafy vegetables can act as a gentle laxative. Adjusting the bone content of a raw diet can also contribute to good stool consistency.

If you live in the UK, Honey's Health Team will be delighted to devise a special dietary plan for your dog designed to prevent and tackle constipation. Feeding a natural diet couldn't be easier and we can do all the hard work for you – working out exactly what your dog should eat each day (and how much, of course), explaining what to buy and how to prepare it. If you would prefer, and you will be under no obligation, we will be happy to supply the food you need and deliver it straight to your door.

Free expert advice

At Honey's we will be delighted to provide you with unlimited, free advice – we don't mind if you never, ever plan to become a customer. Moreover, you can also take full advantage of our Health Team (which includes vets, veterinary nurses and other experts) free of charge. We will be pleased to show you how to make your own food, too. We maintain a list of holistic vets, who we are happy to recommend.

To find a veterinary homeopath: www.bahvs.com

To find a veterinary acupuncturist: www.ivas.com

To find a veterinary osteopath: www.associationofanimalosteopaths.com



Free book

If you want to know about canine health and nutrition, then please visit our website and download our free book *Honey's Natural Feeding Handbook for Dogs*, or email us and if you are in the UK, we will pop a free copy in the post.

General information about raw feeding

The connection between good health and diet is well established in humans. We know that if we eat fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, not too much dairy and moderate quantities of animal protein we will live longer, healthier lives. We also know that if we eat processed food or food containing chemical additives, too much fat and too much sugar we will live shorter, considerably less healthy lives.

In fact, it is well proven that everything from allergies to heart conditions and from skin complaints to cancer is caused by a poor diet. What holds good for humans and human food holds good for dogs and dog food. Dogs that eat a natural diet live longer, healthier lives. The problem is that we have lost touch with what the natural, correct diet for a dog actually is. Instead, we feed them the canine equivalent of junk food.

As a result, we are seeing more and more illness in our dogs and they are leading shorter and shorter lives. The development of all sorts of genetic conditions may also be attributable to generations of dogs eating a harmful diet.

Happily, the situation can be quickly and effortlessly corrected. We know what a species appropriate diet for dogs is and it couldn't be easier to replicate a 'wild' diet using 'tame' ingredients. Furthermore, as those who have switched their dogs to a natural diet will testify, the results can be amazing.

Benefits include a glossy coat, healthy skin, lean muscle tone, robust immune system, sweet-smelling breath, healthy teeth and gums, increased energy, better digestion and a strong heart. Dogs eating a raw food diet can be expected to live longer and to suffer less illness and disease. Indeed, if your dog has any health issues now (even minor problems such as allergies, dry skin, bad breath and what the Americans refer to, euphemistically, as 'gas') it is quite likely that a switch to a raw food diet will clear them up.



**Darling's House, Salisbury Road, Pewsey,
Wiltshire, SN9 5PZ**

Telephone: 01672 620260
Email: info@honeysrealdogfood.com
Web: www.honeysrealdogfood.com

Parts of this text are revised extracts from *The Complete Book of Cat and Dog Health* (Hubble & Hattie 2019) by Dr Lise Hansen. www.hubbleandhattie.com

The advice and information contained in this fact sheet is for guidance only. The Honey's Health Team (vets, veterinary nurses and other experts) is here to help you in any way we can. However, nothing can replace a physical examination by a vet or other qualified professional.