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Gut health & behavior problems.

[Vanessa Jones](#)

There have been plenty of studies done on how the food we feed our kids affects their behavior.

Sugars and refined carbs create over-aroused, cranky children.

The solution?

Remove processed foods and replace with natural alternatives.

When it comes to dogs, the food we feed, and its role in the gut, **are one of the most overlooked when we talk about behavior.**

A [recent study](#) by the University of California Los Angeles found gut **microbes** link to areas of the brain which affect mood and behavior, including (potentially) our response to fear.

In fact, inflammation as an immune response to obesity, high-sugar diets, high quantities of trans fats and other unhealthy foods **may also lead to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety.**

Why?

Well, these high-sugar, processed foods lead to the release of bacterial toxins called 'lipopolysaccharides.'

Lipopolysaccharides normally hang out safely **in your dog's gut**, but when they enter the blood (thanks to those high-fat, processed meals), they become toxic.

But what does this have to do with behavior?

These lipopolysaccharides destroy the brain cells that make the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine.

You know, the so-called happiness hormones?

And research shows that **a lack of these can have a significant impact on your dog's behavior.**

[Related] Where can you find these hormones in food? Many fruits and veggies have them. [Find out which ones here](#)

Behavioral brain waves.

Improving your dog's gut health will ensure the production of neurotransmitters.

So, it's all about food?

It turns out that our Enteric Nervous System (ENS) links to the emotional aspects of the central nervous system.

Put simply, every time we eat, **the ENS sends messages to our brain which affects our emotional state.**

We know certain types of foods help us remain calm, and **the same applies to our dogs.**

Ever heard that saying 'you are what you eat'?

Well, your dog is what they eats too, although it's likely you've never thought about it before, **and certainly not in the context of behavior.**

We know processed and grain-based foods alongside food additives cause leaky gut in our dogs.

We also know a child who receives too many food additives can become hyperactive and out of control.

And yes, we know dog behavior problems stem from **not receiving a natural diet free from chemicals and preservatives.**

These problems can include:

Separation anxiety

Aggression

Hyperactivity

Obsessive-compulsive disorders

Self-mutilation.

Helping to support them by taking a holistic approach to their health and wellbeing will aid them in their recovery.

Related: What the heck is leaky gut, anyways? [Find out here](#)

Ways to support your dog's gut.

There are many things we can do to help the gut work efficiently and lessen any negative impact it might have on dog behavior problems.

For starters, **consider the amount of chemicals you're putting into your dog's body.**

Are these necessary?

Where are they coming from?

Their food?

Their environment?

Or are they part of the regular vaccines or deworming protocols your vet recommends?

Wherever they come from, are they overloading his system?

Looking at some “suggestions” that will help support your dog’s gut:

#1 Consider titer testing instead of over-vaccinating.

When a dog is vaccinated it compromises the immune system and upsets the delicate balance of bacteria in the gut, not forgetting that if the gut immunity is good, this supports the overall immunity of the body.

{See articles on this website about over vaccination and new vaccination protocols}.

Please note! This is not about not vaccination.

This is advising you have a titer test done for immunity before adding toxic chemicals to your dog’s system.

Find more on [titer testing here](#) *{Also see articles about titer testing before you follow it up with any booster vaccinations – you have choices.}*

#2 Use natural remedies for deworming

Human-grade diatomaceous earth or ground-up pumpkin seeds are two effective ones to try.

Commercial dewormers are toxic chemicals.

They kill worms but they also kill the good bacteria in the gut, hence it follows that your dog’s gut immunity will be compromised.

#3 Use a holistic vet.

A holistic vet will take a ‘whole of body’ approach to health issues. They will be unlikely to pump your dog full of harmful drugs and chemicals unless absolutely necessary.

Holistic vets generally adhere to a more natural approach to medicine which might include alternative treatments such as herbal remedies, acupuncture and massage.

They generally advocate raw feeding as well.

#4 Provide fresh water instead of chlorinated municipal water.

{See articles about the dangers of the water you give to your dog on this website}.

If we wish to avoid toxicity in the gut then supplying fresh, filtered water will be beneficial and will not have the added dangers of chlorine content in tap water.

#5 Use natural remedies for fleas and ticks.

Again, flea and tick products contain harmful chemicals which destroy the gut bacteria.

Using natural remedies means you can avoid these.

{See safe natural remedies for tick and flea control on this website}.

#6 Provide probiotics and prebiotics & enzymes on a regular basis.

{See articles about pro prebiotics and enzymes on this website}

You can do this easily by adding fermented veggies or kefir to your dog's diet.

Green tripe contains these as well as digestive enzymes.

Anything we can do to support the gut and its good bacteria will support the immune system.

#7 Provide a species-appropriate high-protein, low-carb balanced raw food diet. {See articles about raw feeding o this website}

Keep it free from grains, preservatives, sugars and processed foods.

Many dogs become less hyperactive and anxious from this one simple step.

#8 Supplement with bone broth.

{See articles about bone broth on this website}.

Apart from supporting the immune system, the collagen bone broth contains helps heal gut lining and reduces intestinal inflammation.

[Related] It's easy and cheap to make. [Here's a recipe.](#)

#9 Feed the gut with supplements.

{See articles about herbs oils and EFA on this website}

Try turmeric (an anti-inflammatory) and slippery elm or marshmallow root (to line the gut).

Coconut oil will also help with a leaky gut as it destroys bad bacteria and candida.

#10 Ease stress where possible as chronic stress can affect gut health.

{See articles about stress on this website}

This might include calming music, pheromones such as Adaptil, calming herbs such as skullcap or valerian, a Thundershirt or wrap, desensitization techniques, counter-conditioning, massage and T-Touch.

#11 Exercise can also help reduce a leaky gut.

{See articles about leaking gut on this website}

Make sure your dog is getting enough – about 20 – 30 minutes a day as a minimum.

If you have a dog with behavioral issues then addressing gut health is the most important first step.

Following the suggestions above is only one step on the path to success ... but it's a big (and important) one.

ARE YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS LINKED TO DIET?

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AND THIS CAN LEAD TO BEHAVIOR ISSUES LIKE:

- 1 Separation anxiety
- 2 Aggression
- 3 Hyperactivity
- 4 Obsessive-compulsive disorders

HOW TO HEAL YOUR DOG'S GUT



Consider titer testing instead of over-vaccinating.

Use natural remedies for deworming.



Use a holistic vet who will take a 'whole of body' approach to health issues.

Provide fresh water instead of chlorinated.



Use natural remedies for fleas and ticks.

Provide probiotics and prebiotics on a regular basis.



Provide a species-appropriate high-protein, low-carbohydrate balanced raw food diet.

Supplement with bone broth.



Feed the gut with supplements.

Ease stress where possible as chronic stress can affect gut health.



Exercise can also help reduce a leaky gut so make sure your dog's getting enough.

When it comes to dog behavior problems, address the reason, not the reaction.

It is suggested taking a holistic approach to this issue, one that tackles genetics, breed, upbringing, diet, environment, health, exercise, training and behavior modification.

When addressing the emotional state of a dog (one which affects behavior), it's important to consider all these factors as they influence the dog's wellbeing – its mind, its body and its soul.

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