

Dog Eating Poop

Learn what you can do to help your dog break this disgusting habit.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q: We love our 18-month-old Maltese very much, but she has the worst habit I have ever seen. She eats her own and other dogs' poop. We tried putting meat tenderizer on her food, but it had no effect. I have heard an incomplete diet might be why she indulges herself with this habit, but I don't think her diet is missing anything. Do you have any suggestions?

A: This unpleasant dog behavior is known as coprophagia, the rather distasteful habit that compels some dogs to eat their own and other dogs' feces.

The good news is your dog will probably outgrow it — as most dogs do. But until she does, there is not much you can do about it.

While you are waiting for your dog to improve her culinary tastes, immediately clean up any feces, and keep your dog on a leash to limit her access to it. Also keep her on a monthly deworming medication and heartworm preventive.

With regard to diet, there are numerous products that you can sprinkle on your dog's food to discourage coprophagia, but there is little evidence of how effective they are.

Ultimately, keeping your dog away from any feces, her own or another dog's, will help her outgrow this habit.

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