

CANINE DETOXIFICATION: Regaining Health

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Detoxification is a process by which the body rids itself of poisons; toxins obtained from foods, liquids and/or medicines. The reasons for which bodies may experience a state of detoxification when going through a cleansing program and/or a complete change of diet, is because those toxins are unnatural, foreign substances to the body. So, the body's reaction is to dispel them in order to establish a healthy state once again; however, this process is not always a pleasant one.

For canines, toxins are found in many dog foods, treats, and chews that are widely available through stores, private vendors, pet magazines, etc. And, many people unknowingly give these products to their canines, without understanding what is actually going into their bodies. But, when canine parents make the effort to learn about these things and decide to transition to a natural, holistic diet, it is very possible that their canines will experience a state of detoxification. And again, this process is not always a pleasant one, but it will yield positive results.

Upon the provision of a new nutrition regimen, canines may experience eye drainage, ear infections, various bacterial related infections, strong odor, quivers, excessive shedding, hot spots (lick granulomas), irritated/itchy skin, loose stools, and vomiting, to name a few. It is difficult to determine, ahead of time, which canines will experience a state of detoxification and which ones will not. Likewise, it is also difficult to determine, ahead of time, how bad the detoxification process may be for them. These symptoms may appear within a few days or a few months when their bodies are actually healthy enough to detoxify. Additionally, the symptoms may last a few weeks or may drag on up to 6 months. As horrible as this all sounds, it is critical to put it into this perspective: If their bodies are experiencing horrible ailments as the result of cleansing toxins from their bodies, imagine what those toxins were doing inside their bodies before this process began!

Now for the good news! This detoxification phase will not last forever – afterwards, they will be healthier than ever, it just takes patience and perseverance to get through it. In fact, the detoxification process is a manifestation of healing; when you see these things happening, you know that the body is doing what is necessary in order to expel these foreign substances. Unfortunately, many people do give up when they switch to a healthy diet because they were unprepared for what to expect. So, they switch back to the previous commercial food and all of the undesirable ailments go away. Well, of course they do! The body was trying to expel those toxins through the implementation of a healthy diet, but when that process was stopped and they were fed those toxins again, the body reverts back to its original state. So, do not give up for your dog's sake!

Of course, when and if canines do experience symptoms associated with detoxification, such as bacterial infections or ear infections, they will need to be seen by a veterinarian and treated with the appropriate antibiotic, but you still need to keep going! You will want to be sure to provide them with a source of probiotics during and after the antibiotic treatment, to replace the good bacteria in the gut that the antibiotics kill off. Further, if the skin becomes itchy and uncomfortable, there are a variety of supplements and grooming techniques that can combat this. Additionally, you will want to keep them in a comfortable, thermoneutral environment, as extreme hot or cold temperatures will just make the detoxification process harder for them. It is absolutely critical to keep up with routine cleaning and trimming of their paw hair, inner ear hair, lip fold hair, and vulva areas (if female), keeping those areas clean and dry. Remember, when moisture gets trapped on the skin, that is a breeding ground for yeast and bacteria. It may even be beneficial to place an e-collar (cone) on their heads to prevent them from biting/scratching/licking their bodies during this phase as well.

Our canine kids rely upon us to provide them with the best that life has to offer, so the first place to start is with their nutrition. Do not be fooled with all the clever advertising in the media; do not be easily swayed by pet food sales people. Each dog is different and requires different nutritional requirements – only a professional who has studied canine nutrition can help you determine your dogs' needs. Not all dogs will experience detoxification when switching diets; however many will, so remain patient and keep in regular contact with your nutrition consultant and/or holistic veterinarian to help them through this process so that your canine kids main regain health!