

# **COPROPHAGIA**

## **(Eating Feces)**

Many dogs develop the unpleasant habit of eating feces. In some pets, it becomes almost a compulsive behavior. These pets may not only eat their own stool, but also those of other animals.

Several theories have been presented to try to explain the behavior. Possible causes are thought to be boredom, too much confinement, vitamin or mineral deficiencies, and neurotic behavior.

Stool eating is certainly a disgusting habit but rarely does it cause serious medical problems. Certain intestinal parasites can be transmitted through coprophagia but mostly the habit just creates a socially unacceptable dog with very objectionable breath.

**IMPORTANT POINTS IN TREATMENT.** With certain pets there seems to be nothing that you can do to stop this disgusting habit. However, here are a few “tips” that might help:

1. Remove the feces from the premises daily.
2. Do not confine your dog to a small area where it will have a bowel movement in close proximity to where it spends most of its time.
3. Prevent access to the cat's litter box.
4. Provide regular exercise.
5. Give a good, daily vitamin/mineral supplement.
6. Consider changing the pet's food. Alternate from high fiber foods to low fiber foods.
7. Have the pet tested for internal parasites.
8. Try adding FORBID® to the pet's food on a daily basis. This monosodium glutamate product will impart a disagreeable taste to the pet's own stool. It will help stop coprophagia 50% of the time. It is available at our clinic.

