

Coprophagia

Let's hope that you have little use for this lesson!

Coprophagia is Latin for "eating feces", hereafter called poop. To set your mind at ease it is, in itself, not a health problem. However, we try to treat it, as it is socially unacceptable to, we humans. And it results in bad breath

It manifests itself in several forms:

- Eating other animals' poop -cat litter is a common problem
- Eating another dog's poop
- Eating their own poop

Why do they do this? With puppies, it is largely curiosity. Tasting everything that they encounter is one way of learning about this world. Another possibility is that they are just mimicking their mother who is known to eat puppy poop as a way of keeping the whelping pen tidy.

Dog's taste sensations are vastly different than ours. Maybe it just tastes good to them. I once had a dog with this problem and I tried to counter the taste by sprinkling it with tabasco sauce. Well, it turned out that the pup thought this was the most delicious thing he had ever eaten!

It can be indicative of a dietary deficiency, so your vet should always be consulted.

What can be done to break this bad habit? Your vet may be able to prescribe a food additive that makes the poop taste bad for a dog. I have found the best solution is to just remove the temptation i.e., immediately clean up after your dog, and faithfully remove anything left by visiting dogs. Actually, just to be a good dog citizen, you should routinely pick up any deposit your dog leaves in public

There is an easier solution if your problem is with cat poop. That is to block the litter box in such a way that an agile cat can reach it, but the larger dog cannot.

I intended to make this lesson "short and sweet". The short part was easy, but making this subject sweet was a real challenge!