



## Coprophagia

Puppies eat their excrements to play, explore, or by imitation. The causes are linked to primary and secondary reinforcements. These can be boredom, a deficiency in pancreatic enzymes, a diet too rich in carbohydrates (primary reinforcements), avoidance of physical punishment (severe conditioning used in situations where a dog has a soiling problem), or ultimately, a lack of attention (secondary reinforcements). Basic treatment consists in modifying the diet, beginning with the elimination of table scraps, reducing the portions at mealtime, eating regular meals at regular intervals.

Dogs that eat their stools belong to one of two categories :

- \* Those that eat them all the time.
- \* Those that eat them only on occasion.

Dogs that eat their excrements only on occasion do so because there has been a change in their diet. The system cannot digest the new elements, so the food comes out without having been digested. This food contains nutrients, and the dog simply eats it.

We recommend that you take care of the physiological cause, before you contemplate re-education. In all cases of coprophagia, it is necessary to maintain regularity in the amount and the quality of the food the dog is eating. A change in food can neutralize the effects of re-education, as the dog will perceive the presence of nutrients in his stools. Also, the dog must eat twice a day. The more the dog eats, the more he defecates. If you are present to correct his wrongful elimination, it is much easier to correct the situation. Be particularly attentive to your dog's stools. The dog must be fed sufficiently so that the dog has firm stools. If they are soft, it means the dog is eating too much, and there will be discernible nutrients in his stools. Reduce the volume of food you give your dog by 10%, so that an ideal consistency can be obtained.

Each time you catch your dog eating his stools, give him the hypo-allergenic spray. Then, throw the

ball at him, or give him a series of commands to distract him.

However, many dogs wait for the master's absence to eat his stools. Hide and observe your dog. As soon as he nears his stools or those of another animal, use the long spray. Do not pick up the dog's stools in his presence; go inside, give him time to commit the error, and come out about 10 minutes later. Pick them up after the education session. If after defecation, the dog doesn't go back to his stools, congratulate him joyously, and reward him.