

Nutrition Excellence!

September 2011



We have all experienced the distinct aromatic result of canine flatulence (excessive formation of gases in the stomach or intestine), and who hasn't conveniently blamed their dog for their own inappropriate moment? Despite the humorous overtones of the situation, excessive flatus (the proper term for the expelled gas) can be a problem for some dogs.

What causes flatus? The production of gas is surprisingly complex, but the majority of malodorous gases are formed by bacterial fermentation of some foods in the dog's colon. Poorly digestible feeds are good substrates for gas production in general, and foods with large amounts of non-absorbable oligosaccharides (complex sugars), fermentable fiber, or sulfates (think rotten egg smell) are prime gas producers. Legumes (soybeans, peas, and beans) and sulfur-containing foods (onions, nuts, spices, and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli) are often associated with frequent and fragrant flatus.

The good news is excessive flatulence can usually be reduced through dietary management. Studies published in the American Journal of Veterinary Research suggest that eliminating legumes (such as soybean meal) and making rice the primary source of carbohydrate can greatly reduce flatulence in both dogs and cats. Also avoid vegetable-based foods with sulfur-containing ingredients. Figure 1 shows the production of breath hydrogen in dogs on several different dietary regimens. Since hydrogen can be produced in the body only by bacterial fermentation of carbohydrates, it is a good indicator of intestinal gas production. Note that rice-containing feeds produce little to no gas.

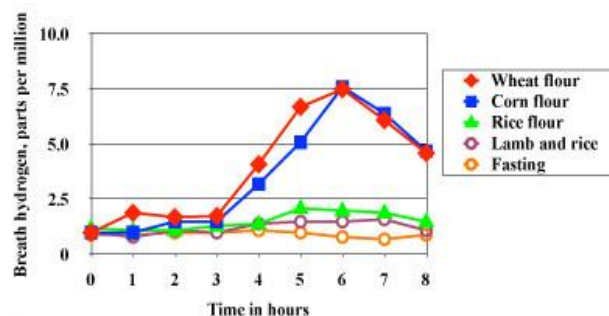


Figure 1. Mean breath hydrogen concentrations in dogs on different dietary regimens. Note that rice or lamb-and-rice diets produce little more gas than fasting. (Adapted from Washabau, R.J., D.R. Strombeck, C.A. Buffington, and D. Harrold. American Journal of Veterinary Research 47:1403-1404, 1986)

Dogs with flatus problems are good candidates for Exclusive® and Infinia® products. All Exclusive® and Infinia® pet foods are soy-free and wheat-free (and Infinia® foods have no corn products as well) and use healthful brown rice for optimal digestion. In addition, Exclusive® and Infinia® foods contain chicory root (a natural "prebiotic" to encourage beneficial gut microbial activity) and dried fermentation products, which contain actual beneficial microorganisms which help to optimize digestion.

Neither you nor your dog need be aromatic victims. The right food can go a long way to having you and your pet breathing easy again!

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Yamka, R.M., D.L. Harmon, and W.D. Schoenherr. 2006. In vivo measurement of flatulence and nutrient digestibility in dogs fed poultry by-product meal, conventional soybean meal, and low-oligosaccharide low-phytate soybean meal. Am. J. Vet. Res. 67:88-94

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