

# A raw diet for under-six-month-old puppies may reduce the risk of inflammatory bowel disease

March 17 2021

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

According to a study conducted at the University of Helsinki, a raw diet from the late stages of suckling to roughly two months of age may

reduce the prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in dogs later in life.

In addition, a raw diet administered subsequently up to six months was found to have a positive effect. At the same time, the study indicates that feeding dry food to puppies early on in their lives can increase the incidence of IBD later in life.

In addition to the diet, the maternal history of IBD as well as the dog's gender and age were associated with the onset of the disease in adulthood.

"Puppies whose dam suffered from IBD had a 7.9-fold risk of developing the disease, with male puppies carrying a risk that was 2.1 times that of female puppies. IBD was most prevalent among five- to 10-year-old dogs," says Manal Hemida, DVM, the principal investigator of the study from the Helsinki One Health network.

Vaccinations given to dams during or shortly prior to pregnancy made the likelihood of IBD in their offspring 1.5-fold compared to puppies whose dams had not been vaccinated in the corresponding period.

Another relevant factor was the puppies' weight: Slim puppies had a 1.4-fold chance of developing the disease in adulthood compared to puppies with normal weight.

"However, it is still unclear if the lower body weight is a consequence of undiagnosed early IBD. All of our study's findings may suggest causal relationships, but do not prove them. Future prospective longitudinal dietary intervention studies are needed to confirm our findings, as well as to develop primary strategies for IBD prevention in dogs," says Docent Anna Hielm-Björkman, leader of the DogRisk research group.

As data for the study, the researchers used an online feeding survey introduced in 2009 by the DogRisk research group of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Helsinki. The study investigated environmental exposures in four early life stages of dogs, two of which were the dog's intra-uterine life as a fetus and the lactation period, during which newborns receive all of their nutrition from suckling. The latter two stages were the early (one to two months of age) and late (two to six months of age) puppyhood periods.

**More information:** Manal Hemida et al, Early Life Modifiable Exposures and Their Association With Owner Reported Inflammatory Bowel Disease Symptoms in Adult Dogs, *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* (2021). [DOI: 10.3389/fvets.2021.552350](https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2021.552350)

Provided by University of Helsinki

Citation: A raw diet for under-six-month-old puppies may reduce the risk of inflammatory bowel disease (2021, March 17) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-03-raw-diet-under-six-month-old-puppies-inflammatory.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--