GI EXCHANGE: Benefits of colostrum for adult animals

Why is colostrum important?
It is well known that colostrum, found in mothers’ milk, is rich in immunoglobulins, growth factors and other active compounds that stimulate the immune systems of newborn puppies and kittens, and support gastrointestinal (GI) health. What is less well understood is that colostrum has also been found to have immune and GI benefits for growing and adult animals.

How does colostrum help growing and adult dogs and cats?
Nestlé Purina research shows that dietary supplementation with colostrum:

- stabilizes intestinal microflora, which helps reduce risk of stress-related diarrhea, improves GI health and supports nutrient absorption;
- supports greater titers against canine distemper virus four to 10 months postvaccination;
- increases levels of fecal immunoglobulin A (IgA), which supports the gut’s protective function; and
- helps promote a healthy immune system.

Purina Veterinary Diets® EN Gastroenteric® Canine and Feline dry formulas are the only therapeutic diets with a natural source of immunoglobulins from colostrum.

What have studies shown about the benefits of colostrum for GI problems?
We evaluated the ability of colostrum to enhance gut and immune health in 24 sled dogs ranging from 2 to 7 years of age. Dogs were fed a control diet or a control diet supplemented with bovine colostrum. We monitored gut and immune colostrum. We monitored gut and immune health during the 40-week study, which included exercise stress.

Dogs fed the colostrum-supplemented diet had increased intestinal microflora diversity, which reduced the opportunity for bacterial pathogens. They had more stable microbial populations following stress, which helped reduce the risk of stress-related diarrhea. They had increased fecal IgA levels, which indicated enhanced local immune status. And, the colostrum-supplemented dogs maintained higher antibody titers for months longer following canine distemper virus vaccination, suggesting an enhancement in systemic immune status.

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