



Diatoms for Dogs (and cats!)

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What is this a picture of? Your button box? Magnified beach sand? Truly, it's a view of microscopic particles that are a success secret at many fine kennels.

Diatomaceous Earth is a dirt cheap way to control external and internal parasites in all your animals. Sold in the US since 1960, DE is a viable alternative to chemicals for the management of all kinds of tiny pests. It's also marketed as Fossil Shell Flour.

What is it?

It's a non-toxic powder made from grinding up fossils of freshwater organisms and marine life. Seen through a microscope, the particles resemble bits of broken glass. Diatomaceous Earth is deadly to any insect yet completely harmless to animals. It is composed mainly of silica.



How does it work?

The mode of action is strictly mechanical... no chemicals involved. The microscopically sharp edges contact the insect or parasite, and pierce their protective coating, so they soon dehydrate and die. Larvae are affected in the same way.

Can it be fed safely?

Internal parasites can be controlled by giving Diatomaceous Earth internally. It is very important to note that it must be food grade; the earth used in gardens and pool filters can damage your dog. The food grade type is always *amorphous*; the inedible kind is called *crystalline*.

Taken internally, DE can eliminate roundworms, whipworms, pinworms, and hookworms within seven days of being fed daily. To be most effective, it should be fed for at least 30 days, to catch all newly hatching eggs or the cycling of the worms through the lungs and back to the stomach.

DE is already in some of the foods you buy at the grocery store. Products like parmesan cheese shakers have added DE for its anti-caking properties.

Will it help externally too?

Another use for Diatomaceous Earth is the control of external parasites and flies. You can dust your animals with DE, along with their bedding area and surrounding carpeted areas. You can dust your barns, feed storage bins, fowl coops and even your manure piles. Keeps flies down, controls crickets, ants, silverfish, roaches, earwigs, mites and more.

A small amount of food grade DE applied to livestock water keeps algae from growing on hot summer days.

It is even safe for compost piles... keeping down flies without harming earthworms!

DE as a detox

Diatomaceous Earth has also been reported in scientific literature to absorb methyl mercury, e-coli, endotoxins, viruses, organophosphate pesticide residues, drug residues, and protein, perhaps even the proteinaceous toxins produced by some intestinal infections. Given this, DE is very useful as a detox solution, digestive aid and colon cleanser.

Dosage

Use one tablespoon per day in his food for dogs over 55 lbs., two tablespoons for dogs over 100 pounds, and ½ to one teaspoon per day for small dogs, puppies and kittens. For external parasite control, simply rub the powder at full strength into the coat for fleas and sprinkle on bedding.

Warning

If you or your animals have chronic respiratory problems, avoid inhaling large amounts of Diatomaceous Earth dust. It doesn't cause any long term damage to human lungs, but can irritate already sensitive lungs temporarily, as any dust will.

In Short

Diatomaceous Earth may become your new best friend if you want to run a natural kennel, minimize the use of chemicals and save money. You can find it on the internet or at a home and garden store.

Related Links

[Buy it at Earthworks](#)

[Pick up this type at any Home Depot](#)

[Technical info on Wikipedia](#)

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