

Colostrum

What is colostrum?



Colostrum is naturally produced in all female mammals during the first few days following birth.

Colostrum is the antibody-rich fluid produced from the mother's mammary glands during the first day or two after birth. It contains a number of antibodies and growth factors, which young animals and humans can absorb intact for the first couple of days following birth. Once this ability to absorb colostrum is lost, it is still capable of exerting a local effect on body surfaces such as the intestinal tract when it is eaten, or the skin and mouth when it is applied topically.

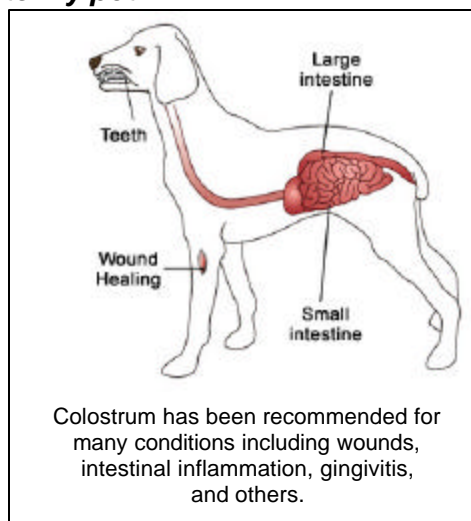
Most commercial colostrum preparations come from cows. Ideally, colostrum should come from a source that does not use hormones, pesticides, or medications that might concentrate in the

colostrum.

Many holistic veterinarians anecdotally report positive results with both colostrum and one of its components, lactoferrin. Lactoferrin is a protein found in white blood cells that binds up iron so it cannot be used by bacteria and fungi. It is also found in many other bodily secretions, including milk and colostrum.

Why recommend administration of colostrum to my pet?

In pets, colostrum has been recommended and anecdotally found useful for accelerating the healing of wounds such as insect bites, abscesses, ruptured cysts, warts, and surgical incisions. When taken internally, colostrum has been shown to aid in the proper function of the intestinal tract, reducing the severity of inflammatory bowel disease symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation. It appears to ease food intolerances or allergies, gingivitis and infectious osteoarthritis. Research evidence also suggests colostrum is effective in stimulating the immune system and as an antimicrobial against bacteria, fungi, and viruses.



Colostrum has been recommended for many conditions including wounds, intestinal inflammation, gingivitis, and others.

How much experience is there with the use of colostrum in pets?

Colostrum has been used for many years as part of the therapy for people and pets with a variety of illnesses. Controlled studies in pets are lacking.

What species of animals are being treated regularly with colostrum?

Any animal species may benefit from colostrum.

How much research has been conducted on this supplement?

Abundant laboratory research exists concerning the potential benefits of colostrum and lactoferrin in the management and prevention of infections and inflammatory bowel disorders.

How can my pet benefit from colostrum?

Any sick pet may benefit from supplementation with colostrum as part of their treatment.

How successful is colostrum?

Studies in people are contradictory with many studies showing benefit and others showing none. Anecdotally, many owners feel that their pets have improved when colostrum is given. Since colostrum and similar supplements appear to be extremely safe, using colostrum as part of the therapy for pets with gastrointestinal mucosal illness is much more likely to be beneficial than harmful.

How safe is colostrum?

Colostrum does not seem to cause any significant side effect and has been used safely in many pets.



Where do I get colostrum and do I need a prescription?

Your veterinarian may have preferred supplements that he or she will recommend. Pet owners are cautioned against buying supplements without knowledge of the manufacturer, as supplements are not highly regulated and some supplements may not contain the labeled amount of ingredients. A prescription is not needed for colostrum.

This client information sheet is based on material written by Steve Marsden, DVM ND MSOM LAc DiplCH AHG, Shawn Messonnier, DVM and Cheryl Yuill, DVM, MSc, CVH.

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