

Licorice And Dogs

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Bet you were thinking we were going to say “don’t let your dog eat licorice, it’s bad for them.” While sharing sugary black babies with your dog might not be in his best interests, the herb licorice may be just what the doctor ordered!



The Health Benefits of Licorice

Licorice is a legume and a member of the pea family that originally hailed from Europe. It’s a versatile herb that’s been used for centuries to treat a wide variety of issues. And animals like it’s taste, so it’s a convenient, easy-to-use herb.

The medicinal properties are found in the root, which contains glycosides, saponins, flavonoids, and other useful substances.

Glycyrrhizin, the glycoside found in licorice, has a chemical structure similar to naturally occurring corticosteroids. This makes licorice an excellent anti-inflammatory for joint and allergy issues. Unlike veterinary corticosteroids, licorice enhances the body’s own natural anti-inflammatory processes, without seriously compromising the immune system. The glycyrrhizin found in licorice also makes it a useful adjunct to hydrocortisone therapy, often allowing for lower drug dosages. Since steroids often have debilitating side effects, licorice is the go-to herb for dogs taking corticosteroids and can even be used to wean dogs off steroids safely.

Licorice is so effective as an anti-inflammatory, that it can even be used topically. Licorice tea, oil or salve can be used to ease the burning and itchiness of flea allergies and contact dermatitis.

Make Your Own Licorice Oil Infusion

Place chopped licorice root in a glass jar with enough olive oil to cover it with an extra 1/2 inch on top. Put a tight fitting lid on the jar and place it in a warm cupboard, away from the sun, for 30 days. After 30 days, drain the oil and squeeze what you can out of the licorice root. The resulting licorice oil will keep in your fridge for several months.

The anti-inflammatory properties of licorice root also extend to the digestive and upper respiratory systems. Licorice is especially effective at healing ulcers and reducing the inflammation associated with bronchitis.

What You Can Use Licorice For

The main uses for licorice include:

- arthritis and joint pain
- itching and burning from allergies
- digestive issues
- topical anti-itch aid
- inflammation
- liver health, detoxification and support pain
- respiratory issues with mucus membrane involvement
- urinary tract infections

Giving Licorice Root

Most animals love the sweet taste of licorice, making it easy to dose. If you use the topical oil, you might be surprised to see your dog lick the sweet treat off as quickly as you can apply



it! Licorice tastes so good for most dogs, that you can even use it to mask the taste of other herbs that he might find icky tasting.

When used internally, it’s often best to use a tincture instead of dried herbs; dogs might not be able to digest enough of the licorice to make it effective. The dosage depends somewhat on the dog and the

application, but a general rule of thumb is:

- Tincture – 12 to 20 drops per 20 pounds of body weight, twice daily (this is a good starting point)
- Tea – 30 to 60 drops per 20 pounds of body weight, twice daily (steep 1 teaspoon licorice root in 1 cup water)

Cautions and Side Effects

Like other cortisone-like substances, licorice can cause sodium retention and potassium loss, resulting in edema (water retention), hypertension (high blood pressure), and hypokalemia (low blood potassium). In human studies, this is typically only seen with excessive and prolonged consumption.

But to be safe, licorice should only be used for two weeks at a time without the advice of a qualified practitioner. If used longer than two weeks, then it’s best to also give dandelion leaf to both act as a diuretic and add dietary potassium.

Licorice root should not be used in diabetic animals, pregnant or nursing animals. If your dog has heart or liver disease, consult with a qualified practitioner first.