

Chicory root for pets



Introduction

Chicory root is a perennial plant that is used for its health supporting benefits. The purpose of this document is to:

- Explain the role of chicory root and how it can support your pet's health
- Provide details on why a healthy microbiome is critical to the health and wellbeing of dogs and cats
- Explain the benefits of adding prebiotics to a pet's diet

A prebiotic for digestive health

The chicory plant is comprised of numerous nutrients, such as soluble fiber, flavonoids, antioxidants in the form of bioactive phenolic compounds, and carbohydrates. The carbohydrate portion of the chicory root plant, which includes soluble fiber, is most beneficial for its role of acting as a prebiotic in the digestive tract ⁽¹⁾.

Prebiotics are a source of food that supports the growth of probiotics. Prebiotics, non-digestible carbohydrates, surpass digestion to reach the colon where they work to increase the growth and activity of the “good” bacteria, probiotics. Prebiotics and probiotics work together in the gastrointestinal tract to create a symbiotic relationship. A symbiotic relationship is one that positively benefits the host ⁽²⁾.

In addition to reducing harmful bacteria and increasing beneficial bacteria, prebiotics, such as inulin from chicory root, have also been shown to improve nutrient absorption in the gastrointestinal tract. For example, calcium and magnesium have both been shown to have increased absorption in a diet that contains prebiotics ⁽³⁾.

Why gut health matters

A healthy gut microbiome, made up of “good” or “friendly” bacteria, such as probiotics, can support a pet’s health in numerous ways. This includes immune function, nutrient absorption, the anti-inflammatory system, and the nervous system ^(2,4).

When the gastrointestinal tract becomes unbalanced with more harmful or pathogenic bacteria than good bacteria, gut dysbiosis can occur, resulting in digestive upset. This can include loose stools, vomiting, and an increasingly inflamed gastrointestinal tract, resulting in more severe effects, such as reduced nutrient absorption and immune function ⁽³⁾.

Conclusion

The positive effects of prebiotics, such as chicory root, in companion animal health are numerous. Chicory root, or inulin extracted from chicory root, has been found to positively influence gastrointestinal tract health. As the gut and digestive tract are at the center of health and wellbeing, and by optimizing the gut, we are helping our pets maintain overall wellness throughout their lives.

References:

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