

The Natural Enzyme Some Pet Parents Swear By

Could an enzyme from pineapple help your pet feel better day to day? Learn how its digestive, anti-inflammatory, and immune-supporting effects make it a worthy addition to your pet's care toolkit.

Reviewed by Dr. Tracy Duffner

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Bromelain is a naturally occurring enzyme from pineapples with a long history in traditional medicine, now being used by pet parents seeking natural remedies for their furry friends
- This enzyme helps break down dietary proteins for better nutrient absorption, making it especially beneficial for senior pets or those with digestive sensitivities and discomfort
- Bromelain can help ease joint pain and inflammation in pets with arthritis by modulating inflammatory pathways, offering a suitable option for long-term joint support
- Beyond digestion and joints, bromelain promotes faster tissue recovery after injuries or surgery and provides allergy relief by reducing histamine activity and skin irritation
- You can offer bromelain through fresh pineapple pieces, frozen chunks, or pet-specific supplements in powder, chewable, capsule, or liquid forms

You have probably come across probiotics, fish oil, or glucosamine in your search for ways to support your pet's health, but bromelain may not be on your radar yet. Derived from the pineapple plant, bromelain is a naturally occurring enzyme with a long history of use in traditional medicine, particularly in regions of Central and South America, where pineapple has been cultivated for generations.¹

Bromelain's role in supporting the body's natural healing and digestive processes made it a trusted remedy long before it showed up in pet products or broader pet health discussions. If you are seeking natural, time-tested remedies to support your pet's comfort and overall well-being, bromelain is worth a closer look when considering additions to their diet.²

5 Benefits of Bromelain for Pets

Bromelain supports pet health through several well-documented biological mechanisms, including its ability to break down proteins (proteolytic activity), ease inflammation, regulate immune response, and assist in tissue recovery. These actions are associated with a range of benefits, such as:^{2,3,4,5,6}

1. **Supporting healthy digestion** — Bromelain helps break down dietary proteins into smaller peptides and amino acids that are easier to absorb and utilize. This helps reduce post-meal bloating, gas, loose stools, and general food-related discomfort that can occur when larger protein fragments remain undigested in the gut,

making bromelain especially helpful for pets with reduced digestive efficiency, including seniors or those with pancreatic or gastrointestinal strain.

2. **Easing joint pain and inflammation** — Bromelain influences pathways involved in swelling and pain signaling. In dogs with arthritis, joint stiffness, or soft tissue inflammation following injury, this can translate into improved comfort and smoother movement. Because bromelain works through enzymatic and inflammatory modulation rather than direct pain suppression, it is considered suitable for long-term use in dogs who need ongoing joint support.
3. **Boosting immune function** — By improving absorption of nutrients like zinc, bromelain indirectly supports the cells and enzymes that help your pet respond to immune challenges. It also helps regulate excessive immune activity, which is useful in animals prone to allergies or chronic inflammatory flare-ups. These modulating effects are part of the reason bromelain is often included in nutritional protocols for pets with recurring immune-related concerns.
4. **Promoting faster recovery from injuries** — During the healing process, the body needs to clear damaged tissue and inflammatory debris before repair can fully take place. Bromelain contributes to this process by breaking down leftover proteins such as fibrin, which tend to accumulate around injured or swollen areas. This can lead to more efficient recovery following strains, sprains, or surgical procedures, and may reduce the duration of swelling and discomfort.
5. **Providing allergy relief** — Bromelain can reduce the activity of histamines, the chemical messengers involved in itching, swelling, and skin irritation. For pets with seasonal allergies, insect bite reactions, or environmental sensitivities, this effect can help ease surface symptoms and reduce the intensity of flare-ups.

Bromelain is often paired with quercetin in allergy formulas because it enhances quercetin's absorption, making both compounds more effective together.⁷ When included as part of a broader plan for allergy support, it may improve skin comfort and reduce your pet's urge to scratch.

Different Ways to Offer Bromelain — Fresh, Frozen, or Formulated

Bromelain is especially concentrated in the stem of the pineapple plant, though the fruit contains helpful amounts as well. Small pieces of raw pineapple can be offered to pets as an occasional treat. Introduced slowly, this can be a safe and enjoyable way to provide a bit of enzyme support along with hydration and natural antioxidants like vitamin C and beta-carotene. The rind can be a choking hazard, so make sure you peel it first.⁸

You can also freeze pineapple chunks before offering them as treats during warm weather. The texture helps slow down fast eaters and may be especially appealing to dogs after physical activity. If your pet tends to swallow food quickly, make sure the frozen piece is large enough to avoid choking. Cats typically are not drawn to sweet foods, but if yours shows interest, it is safe to give a small piece on its own or mix it well into their wet food or other familiar textures.

Avoid offering canned pineapple, as the added sugars can contribute to health issues over time. If fresh pineapple is not a good fit for your pet's palate or routine, bromelain is also available in powder, chewable, capsule, and liquid forms.⁹ These may be offered as single-ingredient supplements or as part of blends for digestion, joint care, or allergy support.

When selecting a product, look for one specifically made for pets to ensure it is safe and appropriately dosed.¹⁰ There is no need to commit to a single form. Fresh fruit, formulated blends, or simple powders can all be rotated or combined based on what works best for your pet's needs.

Tips for Safe Use and What to Watch For

Bromelain is generally well tolerated by pets, but like any new addition to your routine, it is best to introduce it with care. If you are worried that bromelain might be too potent or risky for your pet, the research is reassuring. In one study, dogs were given substantial daily doses of 750 milligrams per kilogram of body weight for six months straight and showed no signs of toxicity. That said, here are some practical guidelines to help you get started:^{11,12}

- **Start with a small amount and monitor how your pet responds** — Some pets adjust right away, while others may take a few days to adapt. Watch for changes in stool quality, movement, appetite, or general mood. These shifts may be subtle at first, but positive changes can signal that bromelain is working well for your pet's body.
- **Use caution if your pet is on medications or has special conditions** — Bromelain may interact with certain drugs, including blood thinners, specific antibiotics, and some chemotherapy agents. These combinations could reduce effectiveness or increase the risk of side effects.

If your pet is taking any medications — or if they are pregnant or known to be sensitive to pineapple — check with your veterinarian before adding bromelain to their routine. A quick review of your pet's current supplements and prescriptions can help avoid unnecessary complications.

- **Keep an eye out for side effects** — Bromelain may cause digestive upset in some pets, including symptoms like diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea. Less commonly, reactions can include increased heart rate, blood thinning, or irritation of the gums and mouth. If you notice any of these signs, discontinue use right away and contact your veterinarian.

A Natural Addition That Earns Its Keep

Bromelain is one of those natural tools that is easy to overlook, but when used thoughtfully, it can bring meaningful improvements in how your pet feels physically, digestively, and in their everyday comfort. Whether you are managing an ongoing concern or simply want to support your furry friend's long-term wellness, bromelain is worth keeping in their care arsenal.

Sources and References

^{1,5} [Nutrients. 2024 Jun 28;16\(13\):2060](#)

^{2,3,8,11} [I Heart Dogs, March 2, 2025](#)

⁴ [Bernies, Bromelain](#)

⁶ [Life \(Basel\). 2021 Apr 6;11\(4\):317](#)

⁷ [Chewy, November 7, 2025](#)

⁹ [Vet Sci. 2023 Jul 27;10\(8\):486](#)

^{10,12} [Alice & Eli, Bromelain](#)