

HOPE



VETERINARY CLINIC

NUTRITION FOR CATS AND DOGS

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PET NUTRITION

In 2007 a massive pet food poisoning event caused the illness and deaths of thousands of pets. The only bright spot that emerged from this tragedy was an increased awareness of the radical differences between high quality pet foods and those of mediocre quality. This brochure will outline the basic nutritional recommendations of Hope Vet for feeding cats and dogs.

THE BOTTOM LINE

At Hope Vet we believe in feeding a diet as close as possible to what nature intended. Cats are obligate carnivores, meaning that they need a diet primarily comprised of meat or animal proteins. We often refer to this as the “mouse model.” For cats living in the wild and eating mice, their diets would be about 70% flesh, 30% bones, blood and organs, and 10% the small amount of grain or vegetable matter that the mouse had in its stomach. Although cats may consume some vegetables and grains, their diets should ideally consist of high quality, wet food made from human-grade meat with a small amount of dry food fed as a treat, if at all.

Like humans, dogs are omnivores, meaning that they do best with a varied diet that includes meats, grains and vegetables. Dogs have evolved over thousands of years of living with humans to share human foods, so a varied diet containing a blend of meats (animal or high-grade vegetable proteins), grains (rice or potatoes) and vegetables or fruits is ideal.

Animals in the wild do not naturally hunt (and eat) all day, but rather hunt occasionally and play or sleep for long periods between meals. Thus, leaving dry food out all day for a pet to graze on not only opposes nature, it can lead to obesity and to other common diseases of domesticated animals including diabetes and kidney disease.

susceptible to parasites, allergies, and diseases of older age than their commercially-fed counterparts.

HOME COOKING

Cooking for your pet might sound like a chore, but most of those who do it report that it is easy to get the hang of and that their pets love the food. Dogs are easy to cook for. Cooking for cats can be a little more challenging nutritionally because of having to ensure the presence of taurine, an essential amino acid found in high quality muscle meats and clams.

RAW FOOD

Raw food has been controversial due to higher levels of bacteria found in the food, thus exposing pets to a higher bacterial load. Holistic practitioners seem to agree, however, that animals do not seem to be affected by the bacterial load (probably because their colons are so much shorter than ours) and that they do very well when fed raw diets. While some people are able to prepare raw diets using meat from the butcher, most people choose to buy the prepared raw diets which are nutritionally balanced. There are a number of raw foods on the market and trial and error will tell you which your pet prefers. Dogs usually adapt quickly to the change. Cats can be a little more cautious, and some people mix in a high-quality canned food into the raw to ease the transition, for greater variety, and to contain cost. As with any major change, we recommend speaking with your veterinarian before transitioning your pet to a raw food.

CANNED FOODS

For people who find the idea of feeding a raw or home cooked diet impractical or unappealing we recommend feeding a high quality canned food containing human-grade organ meats and vegetables, with no chemicals, colorings and preservatives. Reading labels is very important.

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The following two labels illustrate this point:

Halo brand Succulent Salmon Spot

Stew's label reads as follows:

Salmon, chicken broth, beef liver, zucchini, yellow squash, green peas, carrots, turkey, celery, green beans, water (sufficient for processing), okra, mustard greens, calcium citrate, dried kelp, flax seed meal, sweet potato, pumpkin, ascorbic acid.

Nine Lives Seafood Platter label reads as follows:

Meat by-products, water sufficient for processing, poultry by-products, fish, chicken, calcium carbonate, guar gum, salt, potassium chloride, sodium tripolyphosphate, dried whey, titanium dioxide, shrimp, crab, choline chloride, carrageen, Vit E, Vit A, thiamine mononitrate, niacin, d-calcium pantothenate, riboflavin, pyridoxine hydrochloride, menadione sodium bisulfite complex, vit d3, folic acid, biotin, vit b12, magnesium oxide, ferrous sulfate, zinc oxide, manganous oxide, copper sulfate, calcium iodate, sodium selenite, taurine, sodium nitrite (to promote color retention).

In addition to ensuring quality ingredients, it is important to ascertain the meat's country of origin and where the food is manufactured. The pet food recall exposed the fact that Menu Foods (where the toxic food was made) manufactures for dozens of different companies. For an independent list of pet food brands go to www.thepetfoodlist.com. This website lists companies that make their own foods, the source of ingredients and any connections to Menu Foods

DRY FOOD

Many holistic pet food advocates believe that mass market dry food has little nutritional value and is contributing to a nation of obese, nutritionally deprived animals. While we agree, in general, there are better quality dry foods on the market. Like canned food, it is important to check ingredients. Aim for foods that include dehydrated

meats and vegetables, high quality whole grains and do not include by-products, coloring or preservatives. We recommend feeding dry foods as a supplement rather than the primary diet.

FRESH WATER

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of fresh water to the health of animals. There is speculation that some of the common diseases of old age in pets (especially kidney disease) are caused by a combination of dry food and too little water. The best way to “mandate” that your pet drinks water is to mix water into wet food until you have a stew-like consistency. We have found that most pets adapt well to this. For those that don't, or for underweight animals, you can substitute low sodium chicken broth for the water.

TREATS

The same precautions that you take when feeding canned or dry food should be taken in your treat selection. Avoid anything with preservatives or coloring in its ingredients. We continue to hear reports of animals becoming sick when eating imported treats so check the country of origin. As treats are supposed to be fun, this is a time that you might try to experiment and introduce your pet to fruits, vegetables and home made treats. Many dogs like carrots, broccoli and fruit, and many cats like cantaloupe and asparagus.

RESOURCES

For further reading on Pet Nutrition, we recommend the following books:

Natural Care for Dogs and Cats:

Richard Pitcairn, DVM

The Whole Pet Diet: Andi Brown,

Food Pets Die For: Ann Martin

Pet Food Politics: Marion Nestle

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RECOMMENDED COMMERCIAL FOODS

For people who find the idea of feeding raw or home cooked foods unappealing or impractical we recommend feeding a high quality canned or dehydrated food containing human-grade meats and vegetables.

Reading labels is very important. Avoid foods containing by-products, meat meals, colorings, preservatives or other additives and fillers.

The following is a list of foods that Hope recommends. It is by no means comprehensive but is a starter list. Let label reading and your own research be your guide:

Abady	Holistic Blend
Artemis	Honest Kitchen
Back to Basics	Merrick
Bil-Jac	Newman's Own
California Naturals	Old Mother Hubbard/ Wellness
Canidae/Felidae	
Eagle Pack	Pet Guard
Evo	Pet Promise
Evolve	Solid Gold
Grandma Lucy's	Trader Joe's
Great Life	Triumph
Halo	Weruva

HOME COOKING FOR DOGS

We highly recommend home cooking. The dogs we see fed home cooked diets have shiny coats, bright eyes, shed less, and exhibit greater energy than dogs fed canned foods.

Before beginning a home cooking regimen, familiarize yourselves with basic pet nutrition and with poisonous foods for dogs. See the ASPCA Poison control website for details of toxins:

<http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/a-poison-safe-home.html>

“Natural Health for Dogs and Cats” by Richard Pitcairn, DVM is an excellent resource for holistic care, nutrition, and home cooking recipes. As with any dietary change, introduce home cooked foods gradually to minimize upset to the digestive system. The following recipe is a good starting point

- 8 cups dry white rice
- 2 # washed and chopped or grated carrots
- 1 ½ # cooked, chopped low fat meat
(choose from beef, lamb, chicken or turkey).
- 1 14oz can beans (kidney and pinto are good choices)
- 3 x 10 oz packets frozen green peas or green beans
- 3 x 12 ounce cartons low fat cottage cheese
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 5 quarts water

Directions: combine rice and carrots in the water, bring to boil, then simmer until rice is soft (about 40 minutes). Add the peas and cook for 5 minutes, then add the other cooked ingredients and mix well. Yields about 30 cups. Spoon into 1 cup measurements (or more or less depending on the side of your dog), and store in individual ziplock bags in the freezer. Thaw in the fridge about 24 hours before use.

To ensure that pets receive all the nutrients that they need, we recommend including a high quality multivitamin/mineral supplement, such as Vetri-Science’s Canine Plus. Alternatively, Dr. Pitcairn suggests a homemade additive, Healthy Powder:

- 2 cups nutritional yeast
- 1 cup Lecithin granules
- ¼ cup kelp powder
- ¼ cup bonemeal (or 9,000 milligrams calcium)
- 1,000 milligrams vitamin C powder

Directions: Mix ingredients together in a 1 quart container and add 1-2 teaspoons per day to the food for small dogs; 2-3 teaspoons for medium dogs; 1-2 tablespoons for large dogs