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# Pet Nutrition Information

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## Proper Nutrition

- Pet food products that are labeled as “complete and balanced” are designed to be the sole source of nutrition for pet dogs and cats.
- Products that are labeled as “complete and balanced,” as defined by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), have been tested to make sure they meet the complex nutritional requirements of a healthy dog or cat.
- AAFCO is a voluntary membership association of local, state and federal agencies charged by law to regulate the sale and distribution of animal feeds and animal drug remedies. As a group they define the ingredients that can be used in pet food, establish nutrition profiles for dogs and cats and set the approved practices for conducting feeding trials.
- Considerations when selecting a diet include your pet's age (puppy/kitten vs. adult vs. senior), breed, size (small breed dog vs. large breed dog), activity level, medical conditions. Your veterinarian can help provide recommendations for your pet. Prescription diets are available for a variety of medical conditions and may be recommended by your veterinarian.
- A puppy/kitten formula is generally recommended until about one year of age, unless advised otherwise by your veterinarian.
- Each pet is an individual and there is no one product or brand that is suitable for all animals.

## Feeding Guidelines

- The feeding guidelines on pet foods have been developed specifically for each individual food, taking into consideration a pet's size, age, breed, and activity level. Feeding your pet based on previous experiences with other products may not provide proper nutrition for your pet.
- Some pets may eat too much if allowed the opportunity. It is recommended to adhere to the guidelines for the particular product you have chosen, using a measuring cup to provide the proper recommended daily amount.
- Following the feeding guidelines should be based on the ideal weight for your pet; for example,
  - If your pet weighs 25 pounds and is determined by your veterinarian to be in ideal body condition, you should feed the recommended amount for a 25 pound animal, however
  - If your pet weights 25 pounds and has been determined by your veterinarian to be 5 pounds overweight, you should feed the recommended amount for a 20 pound animal
- Pet foods are designed to be the sole source of nutrition for a healthy dog or cat. Supplementing your pet's diet with table scraps or excess treats is not necessary and may add unnecessary fat, calories, salt, sugar or other ingredients to their diet.
- Some “people foods” and ingredients can be toxic to your pet, including chocolate, grapes/raisins, garlic, onions, macadamia nuts, mushrooms, xylitol, moldy foods, tomatoes, coffee, walnuts, avocado, some others as well.
- If you decide to change your pet's diet, you should gradually introduce the new diet over a period of 5-7 days. Mixing small amounts of the new food with your pet's

current food, gradually increasing the amount of new food each day. Rapid diet change can cause stomach upset or other symptoms.

## Ingredients

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the same agencies that regulate human foods, approve all ingredients used in pet food for use.
- Pet food ingredients including muscle meat are by nature by-products. Some of the by-products used in pet foods are ingredients that are considered human grade both domestically and internationally. Examples of these include pork and beef liver, tripe and spleen. Many by-products like liver offer superior palatability over muscle meats when used in dog and cat foods. The by-products used in pet food are an important source of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and essential amino acids. Like all pet food ingredients, by-products from animals or grains are safe, nutritious and approved for use in pet food by federal and state government agencies.
- The same preservatives are used in food for people and pet food. They are approved by the FDA, are safe and are used in very small quantities. Preservatives keep food from spoiling.
- The term "filler" by definition are ingredients that serve no nutritional purpose. Pet food ingredients, including corn, all serve at least one specific function in a product whether it be adding nutrients, providing texture, causing the food to hold its shape, preserving freshness, or performing in another capacity. Many ingredients serve multiple functions.
- Corn is a nutritionally superior grain compared with others used in pet foods because it contains a balance of nutrients not found in other grains. It provides a highly available source of complex carbohydrates, substantial quantities of linoleic acid (an essential fatty acid important for healthy skin), essential amino acids and fiber.
- Food allergy is relatively a rare disease in general. In a survey of veterinary dermatologists, corn was not listed among the ingredients most often suspected to cause food allergies. The estimated incidence rate of corn allergy is less than 2.5% of all food related allergies. Foods most often cited as causing a food allergy are beef, chicken and dairy products.

## Cats – Wet Food

- Unlike dogs and people cats are obligate carnivores—they need a very high protein diet that cannot be provided through dry food that is mainly corn and other carbohydrates.
- Their digestive system and their nutritional requirements are based on a high protein diet. Dry food, developed for the convenience of the pet owner, is known to not supply enough nutrients for a growing cat, cause obesity, diabetes and the ever pervasive urinary tract infection and resulting litter box problems.
- Cats don't drink much water—in the wild, they get their water from the small animals they eat. Wet food gives them the needed hydration they may not otherwise be getting. In addition to wet food helping to avoid urinary track and kidney problems, and weight gain, wet food also prevents boredom.
- Imagine if you ate corn flakes every day for every single meal. Animals just like people have taste buds for a reason. While a small percentage of cats don't like wet food, most devour it enthusiastically. It's also great for positive reinforcement or training and acclimation to change and great for cats that go outdoors -- a set dinner time of tasty wet food helps remind them to come home.
- As with all pet food, it is important to choose a quality brand, the lowest quality wet food is just like eating fast food every day.