

CrossTown Pet Care^{LLC}

Mobile pet grooming service



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Healthy Dog Food

If you check the labels on grocery store foods, you've probably already begun to see that the list of ingredients doesn't always tell the whole truth about what's in your food. The same goes for your pets' food. Behind innocent-sounding words like "meat byproducts" and "meat meal" are horrific manufacturing practices that would turn your stomach. The nutritional considerations of pet foods go beyond the sources of meat in them. Pet food manufacturers add dangerous preservatives and vitamin fortifications that actually make your pets' food less healthy.

What mysterious "meat byproducts" really are

Let's start with what usually appears as the protein source and the primary ingredient in pet food: Meat byproducts or meat meal. Both are euphemisms for the parts of animals that wouldn't be considered meat by any smart consumer. The well-known phrase "meat byproducts" is a misnomer since these byproducts contain little, if any, meat. These are the parts of the animal left over after the meat has been stripped away from the bone. "Chicken by-products include head, feet, entrails, lungs, spleen, kidneys, brain, liver, stomach, bones, blood, intestines, and any other part of the carcass not fit for human consumption," writes Henry Pasternak in *Healing Animals with Nature's Cures*.

Meat meal can contain the boiled down flesh of animals we would find unacceptable for consumption. This can include zoo animals, road kill, and 4-D (dead, diseased, disabled, dying) livestock. Most shockingly, this also can include dogs and cats. That's right, your pets could be cannibals. Fast Food Nation author Eric Schlosser writes, "Although leading American manufacturers promise never to put rendered pets into their pet food, it is still legal to do so. A Canadian company, Sanimal Inc., was putting 40,000 pounds of

dead dogs and dead cats into its dog and cat food every week, until discontinuing the practice in June 2001. "This food is healthy and good," said the company's vice president of procurement, responding to critics, "but some people don't like to see meat meal that contains any pets."

Now that you know pet food manufacturers will seemingly go to any length to fill their foods with the cheapest sources of protein they can find, you probably won't be surprised to find out that the other ingredients in pet foods aren't much better. Cheap grain fillers, cellulose to bulk up the food, preservatives and poorly monitored vitamin and mineral supplements round out the recipe. In *Healing Pets with Nature's Miracle Cures*, Henry Pasternak writes, "Remember, pet foods are primarily processed, grain-based diets. These foods are 'fortified' with synthetic B vitamins, which can cause a subclinical B vitamin deficiency."

Preservatives in dog and cat foods keep the foods seemingly fresh for long periods of time: "Unfortunately, harmful chemical preservatives and other artificial additives are the norm in most pet foods. Some are intentionally added by the manufacturer, while others come from the herbicides, insecticides, and pesticides used by farmers to boost crop yields," Pasternak writes. While some pet food companies have decided to use less harmful preservatives and natural preservatives, most pet food companies don't find these ingredients to be cost effective.

The best food for your pet is food that is made from real, whole foods. Many pet owners say feeding their pets healthy nutritious food brings them peace of mind, and all pets will prefer food prepared from fresh, natural ingredients. Ensuring that your pet eats only wholesome foods will extend the lifespan of your dog, and keep your dog much healthier.

Making the Switch to Homemade Dog Food

First of all, consult your veterinarian before making any kind of switch. Know also that it will take time for your dog to get used to the new menu so introduce homemade dog food gradually, beginning with just a tiny fraction along with the commercially bought food he is accustomed to. Then slowly decrease the commercial dog food as you increase the homemade food, until the former is completely eliminated from your pet's diet.

To ensure that your dog gets balanced nutrition for optimum health, give your pet a mixture of 40% meat, 30% vegetables, and 30% starch (note: there are dogs that do not tolerate grains - in this case - substitute oats, sweet potato, barley, potatoes, etc...). Organs like the heart, the liver, and kidneys are especially healthy for your dog.

Protein is one of the most important nutrients in a dog's diet and should always be included in your dog food recipes. The raw food diet emphasizes the need for protein, but for homemade dog food it is better to cook any meat used in the recipe unless you are fully prepared to research the raw diet and dedicate yourself to this new lifestyle. Proteins that are great to include in your homemade dog food when broiled or cooked include skinless chicken, ground beef or turkey, hard-boiled eggs, salmon, lamb chops and pork loin. Tofu and dairy products like cottage cheese can also be good sources of protein.

Carbohydrates and grain fillers are considered a major problem in commercial dog foods. Too many carbohydrates are a serious issue in many manufactured dog foods but some grains are necessary and perfectly healthy, contributing fiber and nutrients to your dog's diet. Cooked oats, brown and white rice, barley and sweet potatoes are great carbohydrates to include in your dog's food.

Vegetables are filled with essential vitamins and minerals that your dog needs but should be given in limited amounts and only when ground up into the food in order to be properly absorbed into your pet's digestive system. Dogs don't chew their food like humans so vegetables like celery, peas and carrots should be run through a food processor or blender. Never feed your dog garlic, onions, seeds or pits, grapes, mushrooms, corn on the cob, raisins or avocados, and limit the amount of broccoli you put into homemade food.

Flavoring can come from organic beef or chicken broth to moisten the food and give it a taste your dog will love. Vitamin supplements and fatty oils can also be mixed into dog food to boost nutrition and provide all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals your dog needs.

COMING SOON.....

Crosstown Pet Care Canine Cuisine

Homemade dog food made with wholesome, fresh ingredients.

Items on the dog food menu will be prepared with:

- * Fresh meat with no antibiotics, and no added hormones
- * Fruits and vegetables that are well-tolerated by most dogs
- * Natural vitamins & minerals and probiotics essential for well-being
- * Whole grain and no grain varieties

Our menu will be available shortly.

We may be able to accommodate special requests.

Cross Town Pet Care, LLC assumes no liability for injury to you or your pet incurred by following these descriptions, procedures or suggestions.