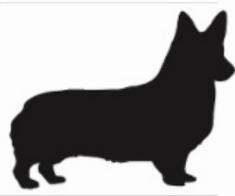




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Should Your Dog's Food Be Grain Free?

Your dog is important to you, so it follows that you want to treat him or her right and provide only the highest quality food. This makes sense, as better food will lead to a healthier, happier life for your furry friend. By researching and finding the best dog food, you are doing a favor for both your dog and yourself.

In recent years, grain-free food has become a popular trend among dog owners. The concept behind grain-free food is that dogs in the wild did not consume grains - rather, they hunted and scavenged for protein-rich foods, mostly meats. Their digestive system has not changed much since those days, so the presence of too much grain, proponents say, may cause stomach problems for your dog.



So, is grain free food right for your dog?

The answer isn't quite as simple as yes or no. There are many factors to consider, including the current health and dietary needs of your dog.

Investigation

July 12, 2018 - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting pet owners and veterinary professionals about reports of [canine dilated cardiomyopathy \(DCM\)](#) in dogs eating certain pet foods containing peas, lentils, other legume seeds, or potatoes as main ingredients. These reports are unusual because DCM is occurring in breeds not typically genetically prone to the disease.

Canine DCM is a disease of a dog's heart muscle and results in an enlarged heart. DCM often results in congestive heart failure. Heart function may improve in cases that are not linked to genetics with appropriate veterinary treatment and dietary modification, if caught early.

The underlying cause of DCM is not truly known, but is thought to have a genetic component. Breeds that are typically more frequently affected by DCM include large and giant breed dogs, such as Great Danes, Boxers, Newfoundlands, Irish Wolfhounds, Saint Bernards and Doberman Pinschers. It is less common in small and medium breed dogs, except American and English Cocker Spaniels. However, the cases that have been reported to the FDA have included Golden and Labrador Retrievers, Whippets, a Shih Tzu, a Bulldog and Miniature Schnauzers, as well as mixed breeds.

Diets in cases reported to the FDA frequently list potatoes or multiple legumes such as peas, lentils, other "pulses" (seeds of legumes), and their protein, starch and fiber derivatives early in the ingredient list, indicating that they are main ingredients. Early reports from the veterinary cardiology community indicate that the dogs consistently ate these foods as their primary source of nutrition for time periods ranging from months to years. High levels of legumes or potatoes appear to be more common in diets labeled as "grain-free," but it is not yet known how these ingredients are linked to cases of DCM. Changes in diet, especially for

dogs with DCM, should be made in consultation with a licensed veterinarian.

In the reports the FDA has received, some of the dogs showed signs of heart disease, including decreased energy, cough, difficulty breathing and episodes of collapse. Medical records for four atypical DCM cases, three Golden Retrievers and one Labrador Retriever, show that these dogs had low whole blood levels of the amino acid taurine. Taurine deficiency is well-documented as potentially leading to DCM.

If you have been feeding a grain free diet and have concerns, please call your veterinarian to discuss your options.

Allergies

Food allergies are not as common as everyone thinks. About 10 percent of all allergies are food related. Most frequently it is the protein source that your pet is reacting to rather than the grains. However, there are some dogs that do have grain sensitivities. For those pups, a non-reactive grain source is probably the best option. If you are already aware of these allergies in your pet, it is likely that your vet has already recommended switching to a hypoallergenic diet. If you are suspicious of a food allergy, contact your vet to have a discussion about your options.

The most common sources of allergens are environmental: grasses, pollens, dusts, etc. These are the same things that people have allergies to and changing to a grain free diet is not going to help this at all.

To learn more about food allergies and the best food choices for your dog contact Adobe Animal Hospital of Soquel today and [schedule an appointment](#).

For More Information:

<https://wagwalking.com/condition/corn-allergies>

<https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/newsevents/cvmupdates/ucm613305.htm>

https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/cardiovascular/c_dg_cardiomyopathy_dilated



Please make an appointment to discuss your pet's health:

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