

So, What Should I Feed My Pet?

There are many high-quality pet foods available, which can make it difficult to choose just one. At Flanary Veterinary Clinic, we carry the Science Diet and Prescription Diet brands of food for cats and dogs. Precisely balanced nutrition, developed through continuous research and innovation, meets the specific needs of your pet. When you feed the right Hill's pet food for your pet's lifestage, you know you are providing the precise balance of 50 nutrients essential to your pet's health and vitality. In some cases, your pet may need a Prescription Diet because of certain health issues, including urinary tract disease, food allergies, thyroid disease, liver disease, and heart disease. For pets who are generally healthy, we are pleased to offer Science Diet Healthy Advantage foods for cats and dogs. This new line of foods combines the best of Science Diet's individual diets for dental health, joint health, skin and coat health, digestive health, weight management, and urinary health into a single food.



Dr. Flanary feeds her own pets Hill's Science Diet because . . .

- 1) Hill's Science Diet was the first brand to have foods that address the unique needs of each lifestage in both dogs and cats.
 - Puppy / Kitten
 - Adult
 - Mature Adult
- 2) Hill's Science Diet has the most extensive special needs product portfolio.
 - Dog: Large Breed, Small Bites, Light, Sensitive Skin, Sensitive Stomach, Oral Care
 - Cat: Indoor Cat, Hairball Control, Hairball Control Light, Light, Sensitive Skin, Sensitive Stomach, Oral Care
- 3) Hill's Science Diet pet foods deliver nutritional advantages.
 - 5x more antioxidants* than typical grocery brands for a strong immune system
 - Enhanced levels of Omega 3+6 for healthy skin and coat
 - Controlled levels of sodium for a healthy heart and kidneys
- 4) Hill's Science Diet costs less than you might think – as little as .31¢ per day**
- 5) Science Diet is veterinarians' #1 choice to feed their own pets

Of course, if you have another Science Diet food that you would like for your pet, we will be happy to special order it for you at no extra charge. All Science Diet and Prescription Diet foods have a 100%, money-back satisfaction guarantee.

Where Can I Learn More?

Our veterinarians are always happy to discuss any questions you may have. We know, however, that many people prefer to research nutrition on the internet. Unfortunately, there are many websites that are not reliable. The sites below are recommended by our veterinarians.

www.catinfo.org (feline nutrition)

www.aavn.org (American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition)

www.aafco.org (Association of American Feed Control Officials)

www.consumerlab.com (Testing agency for dietary supplements)

www.fda.gov/cvm (FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine)

www.flanaryvet.com (Our clinic website)

www.hillspet.com (Hill's Science Diet)

The Bottom Line

Our Flanary Veterinary Clinic doctors and staff are trained in many aspects of pet health care, including nutrition. We offer nutritional advice for your pets at no charge to help your pet feel its best. Talk to us today!

*Vitamins E+C, dry formulas only.

**Based on the RRSP as of January 2010 for a 35 lb. bag of Hill's® Science Diet® Adult Advanced Fitness Original dog food, assuming a 20 lb. dog and recommended feeding level of 1-1/3 cups per day, and a 17.5 lb. bag of Hill's® Science Diet® Adult Optimal Care™ Original cat food, assuming a 10 lb. cat and recommended feeding level of 3/8 cup per day. Data available upon request.

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Nutrition: The Fuel for a Healthy Pet

The Importance of Good Nutrition

Nutritious, wholesome foods make us feel better, live longer, and have fewer illnesses. The same goes for our pets. Scientific studies have proven that pets who are fed appropriate amounts of high quality diets live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Sounds simple enough --- until you find yourself in the pet food aisle, staring at dozens of bags, all of which claim to be "all-natural," "wholesome," and "the best for your pet." It's enough to make your head spin!

Unfortunately, many dog and cat food labels are more about slick advertising than nutrition. There are no legal definitions for terms like "all natural," "human quality ingredients," and "holistic." This means that an unscrupulous pet food company can use these words on any food they want, leaving the consumer to sort out what is actually inside the package. What's a conscientious pet owner to do?

At Flanary Veterinary Clinic, we believe that educating our clients is the best way to help our patients. We hope that the information in this newsletter will give you the tools to choose the best food for your pet, whatever their special needs may be.



Common Nutritional Problems

Pets eating improper diets may develop several types of health problems. The most common nutritional problem we see in our pets is obesity. This can be caused by either the wrong food or too much of the right food. Over half of all pets are overweight or obese. Fortunately, weight loss is much simpler for pets than for humans, primarily because we can completely control our pets' diets. (When was the last time you saw a Labrador retriever placing an order at the drive-thru window?)

Other diet-related issues may include digestive upset, skin problems, and dental problems. Choosing a high-quality food can prevent or even treat many of these issues.

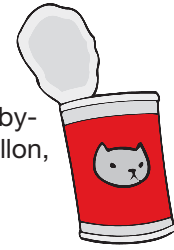
Pet Food Labels: Cutting Through The Hype

Because most pet food labels are designed primarily to convince you to buy the product, it's crucial to know what information to look for and compare. The most important part of any label is the AAFCO statement. AAFCO, or the American Association of Feed Control Officials, is a private organization that establishes the requirements for complete and nutritiously balanced pet foods. Food companies, in turn, are responsible for making sure that their foods meet AAFCO standards. The best way to do this is with a feeding trial, during which the pet food is given to a group of cats or dogs for six months; evaluation and testing of the animals before and after the trial ensures the safety of the food. When you are comparing foods, you want to find one that has the phrase "AAFCO feeding trial" on the label. If a food says "Formulated to meet AAFCO standards," this is NOT the same as a feeding trial and may mean that the food has not been as thoroughly evaluated.

The other important factor to notice is the life stage for which the food is designed. Puppies and kittens have very different needs than senior pets, and young adults have requirements that are also unique. Be sure that the food you are feeding matches the age of pet you have. If a food says "For all life stages," it is actually a puppy or kitten food and is NOT appropriate for adult animals.



Top Ten Myths About Pet Food



1. By-products are bad.

This myth is often found in marketing materials for “holistic” or “all-natural” diets. In reality, by-products are commonly found in many safe pet and human foods, including gelatin, beef bouillon, Vitamin E, and vegetable oils.

2. Pet foods with corn are bad.

Corn is a highly nutritious ingredient. It is an excellent source of protein, carbohydrates, fiber, and antioxidants. Corn is NOT a common cause of food allergies in pets.

3. Meat should be the first ingredient in any pet food.

While protein is important, meat is not the only source of protein in pet foods. Diets that are high in meat are also frequently too high in calcium, sodium, and phosphorous, which can be bad for older pets. Higher protein levels do not mean that a food is higher quality; excessive protein adds no benefit and may be harmful.

4. Commercial pet foods are made with roadkill, euthanized animals, and horse carcasses.

Pet food companies are regulated in the sources they may use for ingredients. None of the above ingredients are permitted in pet food.

5. Pet foods that are “natural”, “holistic,” or “human grade” are superior.

According to AAFCO, the term “natural” requires a food to consist of only natural ingredients without chemical alterations, which has little to no bearing on the actual quality of the ingredients. “Holistic” has no legal definition and can therefore be used by any company to describe any food. “Human grade” was determined by AAFCO to be a misleading term and can now only be applied to a food if the food is made in a human food-approved plant.

6. Pets can eat vegetarian diets.

There are several commercial vegetarian diets available for cats and dogs. Most are deficient in nutrients required for long-term health, but there are a few balanced dog foods commercially available. **Cats are obligate carnivores; they must eat meat-based diets to maintain their health. There is no such thing as a complete and balanced vegetarian cat food.** Please discuss this issue with your veterinarian before making your pet a vegetarian.

7. Homemade diets are healthier than commercial diets.

It is extremely difficult to formulate a homemade food to meet all the nutrient, vitamin, and mineral requirements of your pet. A recent study found that over 70% of all homemade diet recipes are nutritionally deficient, some dangerously so. If you are truly dedicated to making a homemade diet for your pet, it is essential to work with a veterinary nutritionist to develop a proper recipe. Recipes that are published on the internet should NOT be trusted.

8. Pets should eat raw, whole foods to mimic the natural diet of their ancestors.

Advocates of raw food diets claim all sorts of benefits, from longer lifespans to better health. Some even claim to cure chronic health conditions. Unfortunately, there have been NO published scientific studies to back up these claims. What is clear is that this type of diet comes with many risks, both to pets and their human families. Raw food can be contaminated with bacteria and parasites, which can cause disease in pets and may sicken humans, especially young children, the elderly, and those with suppressed immune systems. Many raw diets also include bones, which can cause choking, intestinal blockages, and even intestinal perforations. Finally, many raw diets (including those that are available in pre-made, commercially available packages) are not nutritionally balanced for long-term feeding.



9. Cats should eat dry food to keep their teeth clean.

Scientific evidence does show that cats who eat canned food have dirtier teeth than those who eat dry food. However, if regular dry food was that effective, we wouldn't be seeing the large number of “dental” diets being introduced to the pet food market. Dry cat foods are actually higher in carbohydrates than most cats require, which can contribute to obesity and diabetes. Furthermore, cats who eat only dry food are chronically dehydrated, which threatens their urinary tract health. Many feline experts now recommend a 100% canned diet whenever possible, or at least a half-canned, half-dry diet. Our veterinarians can provide helpful tips for improving your cat's diet.

10. Veterinarians get paid by pet food companies to promote their products.

There are no financial incentives from pet food companies being given to veterinarians. Our dietary recommendations are influenced only by what is best for your pet.

Treat Your Pet Right

Treats can play an important part in your pet's health. The chart to the right includes some of the more popular treats on the market today. Some are high in calories, fat, or unhealthy ingredients. We carry a variety of treats at the clinic, including some that are appropriate for obese pets and for those with food allergies. Come in and pick up a package of treats today - your pet will thank you!

Treat	Fat (g)	Calories
Milkbone	.3	17
Beggin Strips	.6	29
Snausages	.6	17
Meaty Bone (medium)	1.8	64
Science Diet Light Treats	.3	14
Pounce Cat Treats	.13	3.7
Whisker Lickin's Cat Treats	.12	3

No Bones About It

Bones have been thrown to the dogs as long as dogs have been man's best friend. Some dogs may never have a problem chewing on bones. However, many problems can arise, and for some, it may be too late by the time your dog shows any signs.



Most people have heard that chicken bones splinter and shouldn't be given to dogs, but other bones can cause just as much harm. Bones are not easily digested and usually pass through the stool, which can lead to constipation and impaction of the intestines. Fragments and splinters from bones can also easily perforate the intestinal tract. This can lead to peritonitis and death.

Bones also commonly get lodged in the roof of a dog's mouth or throat, which causes damage that leads to severe infections. Choking is another common and many times fatal problem if dogs are allowed to chew on bones.

If your pet has chewed on a bone, watch for these signs: bloody diarrhea, vomiting, straining to go to the bathroom, pawing at the mouth, breathing difficulties, or lack of appetite. If any of these signs begin, please call our clinic immediately.

So, are any bones safe for dogs? Yes, commercial ones. Dogs should be allowed to chew on only “bones” designed for dogs, such as Dentabones or CET chews. Dentabones and CET chews are easily digested, help clean your dog's teeth, and are a safer choice but should still be given in moderation.

Although rawhides are a very popular commercial treat, your dog should be watched closely if chewing on rawhide. Small pieces chewed off can still cause choking or constipation if swallowed. We have seen this many times.

So, even though it may be tempting to toss your begging canine a bone, take it from the professionals who see the unfortunate outcomes, and don't.

Off The Table

With holiday parties and family get togethers, the temptation to include your pet in the fun and food may send your cat or dog to spend some time at the vet clinic.

Feeding people food to your dog or cat is not a good choice. Dr. Flanary always stresses to clients one of the worse things you can do is feed your pet people food!! When your pet is fed consistently the same food at the same times every day, they are less likely to develop stomach upset and are less finicky. Sudden changes in their diets, even in small amounts, such as one small bite of ham or turkey, can cause vomiting and/or diarrhea. Feeding people food can easily cause liver issues, gallbladder issues, as well as lead to obesity. Some people food, especially fatty ones, can easily trigger pancreatitis, which can possibly be fatal.

So remember to remind your guests and family at your parties and at mealtime to not feed your pets from the table. Also, it is very important to remind children in the household to not feed pets people food. Make sure scraps are disposed of properly and not left where pets can find them. Most pets will eagerly get into the trash can to eat leftovers!!! Should your pet develop signs of stomach upset, such as vomiting or diarrhea, please call the Flanary Vet Clinic immediately to treat as early as possible.

