

What's in Your Pet's Bowl?

Our Thoughts About Pet Food

What we feed our dogs and cats each day is the most important decision we can make concerning their health and well-being. With the proper nutritional building blocks, the body can make its own repairs when a health problem arises. Eating a high quality diet is the best health insurance our pets can have.

Fresh Food Diets

A diet of fresh, unprocessed meats, organs, bones, and vegetable matter is closest to the evolutionary diet of our pets' wild canine and feline ancestors. Trying out different types of diets with our own animals over the years, we have discovered that a mostly fresh food diet yields outstanding results, with beautiful coats, clear eyes, sweet breath, great teeth, calm dispositions, and dogs and cats that are rarely sick. Fresh diets can be served raw (their preferred state), or lightly cooked, if bacteria is a concern.

In our retail stores, we carry fresh frozen diets for dogs and cats made from chicken, turkey, beef, buffalo, lamb, salmon, ostrich, rabbit. They come from **Farmore, Natural Pet Pantry, Nature's Variety, Peppercatz, Pepperdogz, Raw Advantage, R.O.A.R** (our own brand of ground meaty bones and whole bones) and **Steve's Real Food for Pets**. We also have recipes and directions for home-prepared diets available at our stores and on our website.

Freeze-dried foods such as **Nature's Variety and Steve's Real Food for Pets** are made from fresh raw foods that have had the water removed, but still retain most of the fragile enzymes, vitamins, and other heat-sensitive nutrients that are so important to good health. Freeze-dried foods need no refrigeration and can be served dry or reconstituted. They are also a good introduction for finicky cats and dogs who prefer their texture and mouth feel to that of raw food.

Dehydrated whole foods such as **N-R-G** are made from lightly cooked and raw fresh ingredients that have been dried at low temperatures to preserve their goodness. N-R-G can be refreshed with warm water to provide a moist and tasty meal. It comes in three varieties: free-range chicken, beef, and buffalo.

A Word About Canned Food and Cats

Canned foods are a good choice for both dogs and cats. They have a higher meat content, contain little or no grain, and are cooked more gently than dry foods. Kibble is processed twice, once in the vat where the ingredients are cooked down to a thick slurry, and again in the extruder where the nuggets are shot through nozzles with hot steam under tremendous pressure.

Like fresh foods, canned foods have a high moisture content, 78% versus 10% for kibble. This extra moisture is especially important to cats. Originally desert animals, cats are inefficient drinkers, designed by nature to derive moisture from their juicy prey. The constant state of mild dehydration of exclusively dry-fed cats is a prime cause for the rampant urinary and kidney problems in feline populations. A diet that is 50-75% moist food, whether fresh or canned, will bring more fluids to the kidneys and head off these problems. Check labels carefully, and look for canned foods without by-products or grain fillers.

Kibble – The 50% Rule

Dry pet food is an invention of convenience that has come a long way since its inception 50 years ago as a way to feed pets on inexpensive grain and very little actual meat. As carnivores, dogs and cats are far healthier eating more meat and fewer carbohydrates. Some very conscientious pet food companies now make high meat kibble using human quality ingredients – fresh (not rendered) chicken, turkey, lamb, fish, dairy products, eggs, fruits, and vegetables. These ground-breaking products, including **Innova (Original & Evo), Nature's Variety, Newman's Own Organics, Organix, Pinnacle, Wellness** and some others, are preserved naturally with Vitamin C and E, and contain no by-products or fillers. With the highest quality kibble making up 50% or less of the total diet, and fresh foods, canned foods, and bones making up the rest, dogs and cats tend to be pretty healthy!

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8050 Lake City Way (206) 524-0199 • 2713 E. Madison (206) 329-8565 • 2127 Queen Anne Av N (206) 283-3959
13510 Aurora Av (206) 267-5090 • 16701 Cleveland, Redmond (425) 881-2232 • 1590 NW Gilman Blvd, Issaquah (425) 369-8383

www.allthebestpetcare.com