



The Autumn Report
Healthy tips for healthy dogs!

Volume 1, Issue 1

IT'S EASY MOVING TO A HOME-PREPARED DIET

This is one of the most popular questions out there. If you have ever considered switching to a home-prepared diet for your dog, read below for some useful advice.

In the Beginning

Be sneaky! Introduce the new food gradually over a period of 7 to 14 days. Start by replacing 10% of your dog's kibble with home prepared food. Each day take away more of the kibble, replacing it with the home-prepared food until you have replaced it with the new diet completely.

To make the transition smoother, add a good quality probiotic and a digestive enzyme. Both products are available at most pet food stores and health food stores.

Benefits

When properly prepared and balanced, a home-prepared diet is, in my opinion, the best choice. Dogs have evolved on home-prepared diets, while commercially prepared diets are a relatively new phenomenon. Let's give our canine friends what they thrived on.

Risks

The risk of commercially prepared pet food has become obvious in the past 18 months. However, improperly made home diets also carry risks of nutrient deficiencies or excesses, and food poisoning. So choose quality ingredients, and prepare your dog's food with the same care and precautions you prepare your own to avoid bacteria.

It's not rocket science

There are many ways to prepare dog food: raw, cooked, with or without grains, medium or low starch, high/med/low protein. The list is extensive. For most dogs a good rule of thumb is:

1/3 cooked or raw meat

1/3 cooked green vegetables

1/3 cooked whole grains

Supplement this with Dr. Pitcairn's "Healthy Powder": 2 cups nutritional yeast, 1 cup lecithin granules, 1/4 cup kelp powder, 1/4 cup bone meal powder (food grade) and 1 gram Vitamin C powder. Mix all together; give 1-2 tsp/day for small dogs, 2-3 tsp/day for medium dogs and 1-2 tbsp/day for large dogs.

Avoid onions, high fat and grapes.

A large batch of food can be prepared and frozen in daily portions. Move from the freezer to the top shelf of your fridge 24 hours before feeding.

For dogs with health problems or special requirements, consult a holistic veterinarian or animal nutritionist before making the switch.

Variety

Variety is the spice of life, whether you have four legs or two! Offer organ meat, fish (note: salmon must be fed cooked) and eggs once a week, on different days. It's best not to mix different protein sources in the same meal. Check out bulk food and health food stores for several kinds of whole grains. Carrots and other root vegetables can be fed in moderation. Fruit can be used as treats.

How much to feed?

Your dog's nutritional requirements can be calculated scientifically as protein/caloric/vitamin/mineral requirement per kg of body weight. A more simple way is to feed 2 cups of home-prepared food in place of 1 cup of your current kibble. For example, if your dog is now on 2 cups of kibble a day, you will need to ladle out 4 cups of home-prepared food. If you are currently using a canned dog food, 1 cup of home-prepared diet is equivalent to 1 cup of canned food.

HEARTWORM TESTING AND MEDICATION

Stop the presses!

Good news! Heartworm testing can now be done at any time of the year with a new DNA test. This test is more sensitive, and can detect early infection. In fact, I recommend the fall test to my clients.

Why test in the fall?

Answer: it's the green way to go. If detected early, it can be treated with minimal risk. This means that many dogs that are considered low-risk for infection (low mosquito exposure) may no longer need to be on heartworm prevention medication. One less chemical burden on your dog, and one less chemical in the environment. It's greener.

LIMITING VACCINATION

Did you know that over-vaccination could lead to health problems?

Titer testing (measuring the blood level of antibodies to a vaccine) is available for Parvovirus, Distemper and Rabies vaccines. It is a good alternative to annual re-vaccination. If the titer level is acceptable there is no need to re-vaccinate, and if it is too low then it is time to vaccinate again.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM THE CANADIAN DOG GROUP SEMINAR, OCT 18/08

1. How to treat a dog with heartworm?

Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms. In case of heavy infestation and heart failure, medical drugs are used and the dog or cat is closely monitored for symptoms of embolism (heartworm pieces lodged in blood vessels). The addition of a protein-dissolving enzyme such as Bromelain given between meals can help break down the heartworm pieces.

If the test is positive but the animal is symptom free, alternative methods of treatment are often successful. In my practice, I use Bromelain, the homeopathic Heartworm nosode and an herbal formula made of Ginger, Wormwood, Garlic, Thyme and Cinnamon.

2. What is Artemisinin?

Artemisinin is the active ingredient in the herb *Artemisia absinthum* or Wormwood. It has anti-parasitic properties. It is also used in cancer patients to help eliminate parasites that can contribute to the susceptibility to develop cancer. It is important to select a good

quality as absorption ranges from 40% to 100% and is quality related. Usual dosage is 1 mg/kg.

3. Does Suramin work with chemotherapy?

Suramin is a drug that was developed in the early 1900's. It has been researched for its application in certain cancers usually along with chemotherapy.

4. Is Amicar useful to reduce bleeding and bruising after surgery?

As a naturopathic veterinarian I do not use Amicar, I use homeopathic Arnica, Phosphorus and Traumeel to minimize bleeding and bruising.

Stay tuned for more answers to your canine health questions in the next *Autumn Report* coming soon. This letter may be reproduced if referenced.

Please note: It can be important to consult a vet to make sure your dog is healthy before beginning any home made medication or diets. All dogs are different. The purpose of this newsletter is to offer general advice. It is not a substitute for proper veterinary care. The author and Canadian Dog Group Limited are not responsible for the accuracy or implications of any of the recommendations contained in this newsletter.

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Thank you very, very much!