

The Pet Journal

NORTHEAST FLORIDA

JANUARY 2017

A close-up photograph of a light-colored dog's face and a cat's head. The dog has a wrinkled forehead and a pink, textured nose. The cat's head is partially visible behind the dog's head, looking towards the camera.

**Healthy
Coats for
Cats or Dogs**

**How I
Became
a Pet Rescuer**

**Things Veterinarian
Techs Wish You Knew**



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A Complete and Balanced Diet for Your Dog

By Mary Straus

Over the past few months, I have offered diet critiques that tweaked good home-prepared diets in order to address health concerns – or simply to optimize the diet. To do this, I analyzed the diets and compared them to the National Research Council's guidelines for canine nutrition. I want to be clear, though: I don't believe this is a requirement for feeding a homemade diet. Just as with the diet you feed yourself and your family, feeding a wide variety of healthy foods in appropriate proportions should meet the needs of most healthy dogs.

Problems arise with how this description is interpreted. Too often, people think that they're feeding a healthy diet when key ingredients may be missing or are fed in excess. Here are specific guidelines to help ensure that the diet you feed meets your dog's requirements.

Complete and Balanced

It's important that the diet you feed your dog is "complete and balanced," meaning it meets all of your dog's nutritional needs. It is not important, however, that every meal be complete and balanced, unless you feed the same meal every day with little or no variation.

Home-prepared diets that include a wide variety of foods fed at different meals rely on balance over time, not at every meal. Similar to the way humans eat, as long as your dog gets everything he needs spread out over each week or two, his diet will be complete and balanced.



Don't bother trying to make every single one of your dog's meal nutritionally complete; as long as he's receiving what he needs over a week or two, he'll be fine. This approach is similar to how we feed ourselves and our families.

A human nutritionist would never expect someone to follow a single recipe with no variation, as veterinary nutritionists routinely do. Instead, a human would be given guidelines in terms of food groups and portion sizes. As long as your dog doesn't have a health problem that requires a very specific diet, there's no reason you can't do the same for your dog.

Keep in mind that puppies are more susceptible to problems caused by nutritional deficiencies or excesses than adult dogs are. Large-breed puppies are particularly at risk from too much calcium prior to puberty.

GUIDELINES

Following are guidelines for feeding a raw or cooked home-made diet to healthy dogs. No single type of food, such as chicken, should ever make up more than half the diet.

Except where specified, foods can be fed either raw or cooked. Leftovers from your table can be included as long as they're foods you would eat yourself, not fatty scraps.

Meat and Other Animal Products: Should always make up at least half of the diet. Many raw diets are excessively high in fat, which can lead to obesity. Another potential hazard of diets containing too much fat: If an owner restricts the amount fed (in order to control the dog's weight) too much, the dog may suffer deficiencies of other required nutrients.

Unless your dog gets regular, intense exercise, use lean meats (no more than 10 percent fat), remove skin from poultry, and cut off separable fat. It's better to feed dark meat poultry than breast, however, unless your dog requires a very low-fat diet.

Raw Meaty Bones (optional): If you choose to feed them, RMBs should make up one third to one half of the total diet. Use the lower end of the range if you feed bony parts such as chicken necks and backs, but you can feed more if you're using primarily meatier parts such as chicken thighs. Never feed cooked bones.

Boneless Meat: Include both poultry and red meat. Heart is a good choice, as it is lean and often less expensive than other muscle meats.

Fish: Provides vitamin D, which otherwise should be supplemented. Canned fish with bones, such as sardines (packed in water, not oil), jack mackerel, and pink salmon, are good choices. Remove bones from fish you cook yourself, and never feed raw Pacific salmon, trout, or related species. You can feed small amounts of fish daily, or larger amounts once or twice a week. The total amount should be about one ounce of fish per pound of other meats (including RMBs).

Organs: Liver should make up roughly 5 percent of this category, or about one ounce of liver per pound of other animal products. Beef liver is especially nutritious, but include chicken or other types of liver at least occasionally as well. Feeding small amounts of liver daily or every other day is preferable to feeding larger amounts less often.



Fruits such as melon, berries, bananas, apples, pears, and papayas can be included in your dog's food or given as training treats.

Eggs: Highly nutritious addition to any diet. Dogs weighing about 20 pounds can have a whole egg every day, but give less to smaller dogs.

Dairy: Plain yogurt and kefir are well tolerated by most dogs (try goat's milk products if you see problems). Cottage and ricotta cheese are also good options. Limit other forms of cheese, as most are high in fat.

Fruits and Vegetables: While not a significant part of the evolutionary diet of the dog and wolf, fruits and vegetables provide fiber that supports digestive health, as well as antioxidants and other beneficial nutrients that contribute to health and longevity. Deeply colored vegetables and fruits are the most nutritious.

Starchy Vegetables: Veggies such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, and winter squashes (including pumpkin), as well as legumes (beans), provide carbohydrate calories that can be helpful in reducing food costs and keeping weight on skinny and very active dogs. Quantities should be limited for overweight dogs. Starchy foods must be cooked in order to be digestible by dogs.

Leafy Green and Other Non-Starchy Vegetables: These are low in calories and can be fed in any quantity desired. Too much can cause gas, and raw, cruciferous veggies such as

broccoli and cauliflower can suppress thyroid function (cook them if you feed large amounts). Raw vegetables must be pureed in a food processor, blender, or juicer in order to be digested properly by dogs, though whole raw veggies are not harmful and can be used as treats.

Fruits: Bananas, apples, berries, melon, and papaya are good choices. Avoid grapes and raisins, which can cause kidney failure in dogs.

Grains: Controversial, as they may contribute to inflammation caused by allergies, arthritis, or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD); as well as seizures and other problems (it's not clear whether starchy vegetables do the same). Some grains contain gluten that may cause digestive problems for certain dogs. Many dogs do fine with grains, however, and they can be used to reduce the overall cost of feeding a homemade diet.

Grains and starchy veggies should make up no more than half the diet. Good choices include oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, barley, and pasta. White rice can be used to settle an upset stomach, particularly if overcooked with extra water, but it's low in nutrition and should not make up a large part of the diet. All grains must be well cooked.

SUPPLEMENTS

Some supplements are required. Others may be needed if you are not able to feed a variety of foods, or if you leave out one or more of the food groups above. In addition, the longer food is cooked or frozen, the more nutrients are lost. Here are some supplements to consider:

Calcium: Unless you feed RMBs, all homemade diets must be supplemented with calcium. The amount found in multi-vitamin and mineral supplements is not enough. Give 800 to 1,000 mg calcium per pound of food (excluding non-starchy vegetables). You can use any form of plain calcium, including eggshells ground to powder in a clean coffee grinder (1/2 teaspoon eggshell powder provides about 1,000 mg calcium). Animal Essentials' Seaweed Calcium provides additional minerals, as well.

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Oils: Most homemade diets require added oils for fat, calories, and to supply particular nutrients. It's important to use the right types of oils, as each supplies different nutrients.

Fish Oil: Provides EPA and DHA, omega-3 fatty acids that help to regulate the immune system and reduce inflammation. Give an amount that provides about 300 mg EPA and DHA combined per 20 to 30 pounds of body weight on days you don't feed fish. Note that liquid fish oil supplements often tell you to give much more than this, which can result in too many calories from fat.

Cod Liver Oil: Provides vitamins A and D as well as EPA and DHA. If you don't feed much fish, give cod liver oil in an amount that provides about 400 IUs vitamin D daily for a 100-pound dog (proportionately less for smaller dogs). Can be combined with other fish oil to increase the amount of EPA and DHA if desired.



Top-quality fish body oil and cod liver oil can provide your dog's diet with valuable omega-3 fatty acids. Be cautious about feeding the amounts suggested on the labels, however; these often supply too much fat.

Plant Oils: If you don't feed much poultry fat, found in dark meat and skin, linoleic acid, an essential omega-6 fatty acid, may be insufficient. You can use walnut, hempseed, corn, vegetable (soybean), or high-linoleic safflower oil to supply linoleic acid if needed. Add about one teaspoon of oil per pound of meat and other animal products, or twice that amount if using canola or sunflower oil. Olive oil and high-oleic safflower oil are low in omega-6 and cannot be used as

a substitute, although small amounts can be added to supply fat if needed. Coconut oil provides mostly saturated fats, and can be used in addition to but not as a replacement for other oils.

Other Vitamins and Minerals: In addition to vitamin D discussed above, certain vitamins and minerals may be short in some homemade diets, particularly those that don't include organ meats or vegetables. The more limited the diet that you feed, the more important supplements become, but even highly varied diets are likely to be light in a few areas. Vitamin E: All homemade diets I've analyzed have been short on vitamin E, and the need for vitamin E increases when you supplement with oils. Too much vitamin E, however, may be counterproductive. Give 1 to 2 IUs per pound of body weight daily.

Iodine: Too much or too little iodine can suppress thyroid function, and it's hard to know how much is in the diet. A 50-pound dog needs about 300 mcg (micrograms) of iodine daily. Kelp is high in iodine, though the amount varies considerably among supplements.

Multivitamin and mineral supplements: A multivitamin and mineral supplement will help to meet most requirements, including iodine and vitamins D and E, but it's important not to oversupplement minerals. If using the one-a-day type of human supplements, such as Centrum for Adults under 50, give one per 40 to 50 pounds of body weight daily. Note that most supplements made for dogs provide a reasonable amount of vitamins but are low in minerals, and so won't make up for deficiencies in the diet. Be cautious with small dogs; I've seen some supplements that recommend the same dosage for 10-pound dogs as for those weighing 50 or even 100 pounds. In those cases, the dosage is usually too high for the small dogs and should be reduced. Products made for humans are also inappropriate for small dogs.

Green Blends: Often containing alfalfa and various herbs, green blends may be especially helpful if you don't include many green vegetables in your dog's diet. You can also use a pre-mix that includes alfalfa and vegetables, such as The Honest Kitchen's Preference. Note most pre-mixes also supply calcium, so you should reduce or eliminate calcium supplements, depending on how much of the pre-mix you use.

Vitamin D Toxicity in Birds



Avian Vitamin D Toxicosis

A nutritionally balanced diet for your bird can help it remain healthy for life. One such nutrient, vitamin D, is very beneficial for the bird. However, if the nutrient is found in excess in the body, it can result in vitamin D toxicosis. Vitamin D also

converts into calcium in the body. Therefore, if a bird receives the required amount of calcium, plus extra vitamin D, it will end up with excessive calcium in the blood.

Vitamin D works together with calcium and phosphorus to keep your bird healthy. Though, any imbalance in their required proportions and the bird may suffer from a variety of medical problems. Parrot families are also more prone to vitamin D toxicosis, especially macaws.

Symptoms and Types

A major problem created by vitamin D toxicosis is kidney damage. This happens because the vitamin D and calcium accumulate in the kidneys, which prevents the organ from functioning normally. One such kidney disease created from the kidney damage is gout.

Prevention

Vitamin D toxicosis can be prevented by carefully choosing your bird feed and removing any excessive vitamin D from its diet. Maintaining a calcium, vitamin D and phosphorus balance in your bird's diet, will also help prevent vitamin D toxicosis.

A display of various pet medications. From left to right: a box of VETIQ HEARTSHIELD plus (ivermectin) chewables for dogs up to 25 lbs; a box of Heartgard 30+ (ivermectin/pyrantel) chewables for dogs 23-45 kg; a bottle of VETIQ TRUPROFEN (carprofen) 100mg 30 caplets; and a bottle of RIMADYL (carprofen) 100 mg 100 chewables. Below the products are the logos for Walmart ("Save money. Live better.") and Sam's Club.

All brands, trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners.
These products, and more, are available at Walmart and Sam's Club.

How To Brush Your Kitten's Teeth

Written by Dr. Sandra Mitchell



You know it needs to be done. Find out how to brush your kitten's teeth with as little drama as possible.

Your kitten may not like it at first, but brushing his teeth should be a regular practice.

"I'm so happy to see how well Cali is doing," I told Mrs. von-Dohlen at her kitten's 12-week health check, "but how is the tooth brushing coming at home?"

This is a standard question in my hospital with every patient that comes through the door. Much like people, animals really do need dental care. Although often overlooked, dental disease contributes to significant disease and pain in our family pets. Did you know that by the age of only 3 years, more than half of cats are already showing signs of tooth resorption (also called cavities, root resorptions, neck lesions and cervical line lesions)? Affected teeth will slowly (and painfully) erode — and the teeth absorb into the body, disappearing entirely!

The Serious Problem Of Dental Disease In Cats

Many veterinarians believe that infection and disease in the mouth contributes to health problems elsewhere in the body. How does this happen? The culprit is periodontal disease, which starts as an invisible protein layer on the surface of the tooth. Bacteria attach to this layer on the tooth, called plaque. Over time, this layer thickens as bacteria die and more bacteria are added, and this becomes calculus. At this

stage, the gum tissue becomes involved, because the bacteria produce toxins that injure the tissue. With time, periodontal disease progresses and begins to affect the bone surrounding the tooth, making it loose and painful. This advanced infection allows the release of debris, bacteria and toxins into the bloodstream, with the potential of affecting the liver, heart, lungs and kidneys. Clearly this is a bad thing!

Teeth Brushing Is Key To Preventing Dental Disease

So, what can we do to prevent this from happening?

Despite all of the marketing about special treats, toys and foods, the best bet is still old-fashioned tooth brushing. In most instances, this isn't as difficult as it sounds — and we will walk you through it!

1. Start Small

First off, get your kitten very used to having you pet, scratch and handle her head and face. Most cats like that, right? Well, that is the cornerstone to brushing teeth! If your kitten is an ace at allowing her cheeks to be scratched, you'll be golden in brushing those teeth — they sit right under the cheek!

2. Know That It's Not All Or Nothing

Next, realize that you don't have to brush ALL of the surfaces of the teeth, nor do you have to floss. Cats tend to accumulate plaque on the outer side (touching the cheek) of the upper back teeth. If you are able to brush from the canine teeth (the big fang teeth in the front) to the back, on the cheek side only of the top teeth, you have completed the majority of the battle.

Now, it is nice to be able to brush the bottom teeth as well as the teeny incisors (between the fang teeth), but that can be a long-term goal. Start small, and aim for the most important teeth — top teeth, fangs to the back. Doesn't that already seem more reasonable?

3. Set Up Your Supplies

Once you have your plan, it is time to gather your supplies. Here, you can be as fancy or as simple as you want. There are a couple of "don'ts" in this list. Don't use human toothpaste in any form. Just as you wouldn't like to brush your teeth with tuna-favored paste, cats are not fans of spearmint. On top of that, the fluoride in toothpaste is a toxin if swallowed, which is why we rinse and spit. No matter how hard you try, I don't think you'll convince your kitten to do that — so the better idea is to use a toothpaste designed for pets.

4. Choose The Brush

Next, choose your brushing implement. There are many, many choices on the market. In general, most people find that a small-sized, soft-bristled veterinary (or child's) toothbrush works well, but there are also finger brushes on the market that can be quite effective. Other people prefer dental wipes, or small pieces of gauze wrapped over their fingers. Remember, the idea is to get in the mouth on a regular basis and remove the soft plaque and bacteria as they accumulate, not to get in there and scrape away hunks of tartar. It has to be easy enough and manageable enough for you to use regularly — and scaled in size to your pet. The brush for a Great Dane is not going to be the same one you use for a kitten. Personally, in a kitten, I prefer a dental wipe or small finger brush — my hands are small and I can manipulate these easily. But what you use needs to work for you and your cat! The goal here is the gentle wiping action, performed regularly. The bristles on a true brush are an added benefit, but are not absolutely necessary.

5. Acclimate Your Kitten To Brushing

So how do you teach your kitten to be OK with brushing? Slow and steady wins the race. Do not force your kitten into brushing, or do anything to make it a less-than-pleasurable experience. The goal is to do this regularly for the next 20 years — and if your cat runs the other way every time you get the supplies out, how well do you really think that is going to pan out?

I usually try to convince my kittens to cooperate with a daily "love session." This means after we've had playtime, wrestle time, run-and-chase time and climb the curtain time — we settle down and snuggle for a while. Initially, I start with just lap sitting and friendly scratches, particularly around the head and neck. We keep these sessions short and comfortable — if the kitten wants to leave at any time, that is fine by me. Most kittens find this very enjoyable, and many fall asleep right on my lap — which is fine, too.

6. Brush!

Once a kitten is comfortable with cheek petting, I change things up by starting to scratch her cheeks, and then slowly roll my finger under her lip and against the outside portion of her teeth — all while continuing the gentle motion and emphasizing the stroke away from the gumline. Once you can

do this, you've made it. You are brushing her teeth!

I continue this on a daily basis, until it, too, is something the kitten accepts just as readily as cheek scratches. At that point, adding the wipe, brush or finger brush starts to bring the whole picture together. Even "dry brushing" (without the paste) will markedly reduce plaque accumulation — which is the goal. This is when you can add in a pet toothpaste. Products with chicken, tuna and malt flavors are readily available and sometimes popular with pets.

If you see blood when you brush your kitten's teeth, it may be time for a trip to the veterinarian. The cause might just be that you are brushing a little too vigorously, but like us — "pink in the sink" may mean gingivitis — something you want to catch sooner, rather than later.

Getting Into A Routine For Cat Dental Health

How often do you need to repeat this routine? Well, the best-case scenario is daily — if you can. However, even if you are able to brush three times a week, you are likely going to be able to help maintain healthy teeth. This is the exact process you can use throughout the life of your cat! And, it doesn't have to take long — a few minutes, at most, could contribute to a lifetime of pain-free oral health for your new companion. So what if Fluffy turns out to have some Cujo genes in her and tooth brushing isn't going to happen? Plan B would be to coordinate with your veterinarian. Using dental health treats, toys, and additives may help slow the inevitable progression of dental disease.

Your veterinarian should assess your pet's teeth with every visit, and keep you updated about the development of any tooth-related concerns. As important as it is, regular tooth brushing is not a substitute for professional dental care, which will be needed throughout the life of your cat. Think about us — we brush daily and go to the dentist twice a year for cleanings. Although most cats won't need a cleaning twice a year, the time will come when they do need some "routine preventive maintenance." Don't wait until your cat has advanced periodontal disease to address it!

So, to wrap up our story, Mrs. vonDohlen was already able to massage the teeth and gums during her daily snuggle session with Cali, and was getting ready to start using her finger brush. In fact, Cali liked it so much she was starting to demand lap time! How wonderful when the patient is not only cooperating — but asking for — something that will lead to many years of a pain-free, healthy mouth!

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7 Innovative Pet Products

posted by Fox Van Allen

Did you know that technology can help your pet live a better life? There are gadgets available that help keep your pet clean, happy, well-fed and fit. You can even find activity monitors for your dog that'll tell you when he's been walked, if he's getting enough sleep and even if he's breathing well.

Which gadgets are right for your pet? Here at Techlicious, we've taken a look at popular pet tech and picked out six interesting items we think are truly worth your – and your pet's – time.

Dyson Groom attachment



We all love our dogs and cats, but we sure don't like it when they start shedding – hair gets everywhere. That's why we here at Techlicious like the Dyson Groom. It's an add-on tool that works with most Dyson upright and canister vacuums that grooms and removes about-to-be-shed hair from your pet. The Groom captures allergens like dead skin cells and can even get to the undercoat before it ends up all over the house.

The Dyson Groom is currently available on Amazon.com for \$57.95. If you need a compatible vacuum, the company makes excellent (if pricey) machines in general. You can check out our coverage of the Dyson's new-for-2015 vacuums here.

iFetch Toy



Fetch is one of the absolutely classic dog playtime activities – all sorts of different breeds love nothing more than chasing balls around the house and bringing them back to you to throw again. But what if you're not around? All the fun of fetch can continue for your dog with the iFetch ball launcher. You or your pet simply drops a 1.5-inch mini tennis ball (three included) in the top of the device and it'll shoot out the front – your choice of 10 feet, 20 feet or 30 feet. The only catch: You'll likely need to teach your dog how to use it.

You can find the iFetch on Amazon.com for \$115.00. Replacement balls are inexpensive.

Petnet Smart Feeder



Good nutrition is important for pets – a healthy diet often means a healthy dog or cat. Unfortunately, knowing exactly how much and when to feed your pet

can be tricky. That's where the Petnet Smart Feeder comes in. You use the Petnet smartphone app to tell the device about your dog – age, weight and level of activity – so it can dispense the exact amount of food needed even when you're not around, eliminating the worry of a hungry pet or overfeeding. The machine washable food hopper holds between 5 and 7 pounds of food and its powered by rechargeable battery so power outages won't interfere with dinnertime. You can even use the Petnet app to have food automatically delivered to your house when you're running low – very cool.

The Petnet Smart Feeder is available on Amazon.com for \$149.99.

Petcube



Unless you're lucky enough to have a dog-friendly workplace, most of us have to leave our best friends home alone during normal working hours. Don't let a little

distance keep you from having some fun, though – the Petcube is an interactive device that lets you play with your pet while you're away. Petcube has a built-in HD video camera (138 degree), a microphone and speaker. There's also a laser pointer game built in that cats absolutely love.

The Petcube is available on Amazon.com for \$199.99.

Petzi Treat Cam



The Petzi Treat Cam, like the Petcube, gives you the ability to interact with your pet even when you're not home. You can use the device to speak to your pet, listen for a reply, take pictures

and – best of all – dispense treats, even if you're thousands of miles away. Petzi can hold as many as 20 to 30 small treats at a time. Because there's a food reward involved, pets will always get excited over Petzi sessions. And a happy pet means a happy owner, right?

The Petzi Treat Cam is available on Amazon.com for \$169.99.

Voyce Dog Collar

Activity monitors have helped a lot of humans live healthier lifestyles, get in shape and lose unwanted pounds. So why not give your favorite pets the same benefit? The Voyce dog collar



is a wearable fitness device that measures your pooch's pulse (via radio frequency), respiratory rate, rest patterns and calories burned. These important vitals can be tracked through your

phone and shared with your vet, if desired. The app will even warn you if your pet's activity pattern changes – a potential sign of problems. The battery on the Voyce lasts for seven days, so thankfully there's no daily recharging requirement.

You can purchase the Voyce dog collar directly through the company's website for \$199. You'll also be required to pay a monthly service charge of \$9.50 per month or \$95 per year.

Litter-Robot II

If you hate cleaning litter boxes, this litter sifting system may be a good investment. It's a round enclosure your cat enters to do his business. Once he exits, the Litter-Robot waits seven

minutes before rotating to drop clumps into a drawer which typically needs to be emptied once or twice a week, depending on how many cats use it.



It works with regular kitchen garbage bags and any clumping litter as well as alternative litters such as Litter Pearls, Crystals or World's Best Cat Litter.

One caveat: Small cats or kittens that weigh less than five pounds may not trip Litter-Robot's sensor.

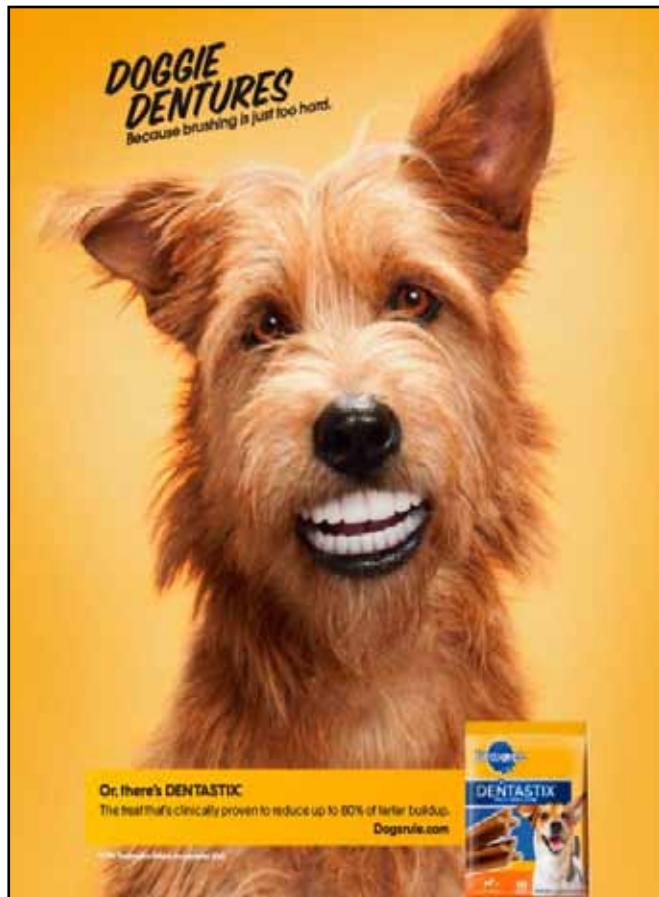
Price: \$369 at litter-robot.com or Amazon

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A photograph of a man and a woman dancing salsa on a wooden floor. The man is wearing a blue shirt and jeans, and the woman is wearing a dark blue dress.



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Pet Advice Corner



Q. How can I help my ferret I think that she has had a stroke. I've had ferrets all my life & have seen these symptoms before

Answered By PAULA SIMONS

A. When ferrets have a disease called insulinoma they can suffer from stroke-like symptoms. This will cause lack of coordination, lethargy, nausea, and loss of consciousness. If your ferret has any of these symptoms, it is important to have her seen by a veterinarian immediately. This disease can be managed with medication and a strict diet.

Q. My cat, who will be 2 tomorrow, has stopped eating dry food and will eat around it when mixed in with wet food. She vomited up her food once also.

Answered By ZANETA KRASON

A. It can be caused by hair ball. Give her special paste (bezopet, remover) If it won't help see a vet

Q. What is the best way to cover my cat's basic nutritional needs? Are homemade diets a good option?

Answered By JULIA HENWOOD

A. All good quality complete cat diets should cover your cat's nutritional needs entirely. So, if you want to make sure you are feeding your cat properly, I suggest you choose a balanced product from a reliable brand.

Some people prefer to feed their cats homemade diets, but my suggestion is to stick with one of those, as it is extremely difficult to obtain the correct balanced through home diets. If you are a strong advocate of natural ingredients, I

suggest you check out Hill's Ideal Balance.

Q. We have a 5yr old shih tzu who has lost his appetite, he has kidney function, we have been giving him electrolyte and nutritional shake (20cc)

Answered By ZANETA KRASON

A. You must be patient and follow the vets instructions. Evaluation of kidney failure could be done after a week of treatment with fluids, diet and supplements.

Q. Can I mix a lower priced dog food like Diamond with a higher priced dog food like Blue to get a food that supplies ample nutrition food more affordable

Answered By DAVID ELBEZE, DVM, MRCVS

A. in my opinion it would be wiser to go for a mid range price food, which will be more balanced than a mix of two different foods. It will also reduce the incidents of allergies (more ingredients means more potential allergens).

Q. My dog is 2 years old and from one day to another he was shaking and loosing balance, took him to the vet said it looks like he had got it to toxic

Answered By JULIA HENWOOD

A. It could well have been a toxic reaction. Depending on what the toxin was will vary the possibility of long term damage and treatment protocol. If he is still having symptoms it is worth having him checked over again. I hope he does ok.

Q. Which common foods are poisonous to pets?

Answered By DANA KOCH, VMD, MLAS

A. That's a great question. As responsible pet owners we need to be aware of food items that can be harmful to our canine or feline

companions. Here are some of the most common foods proven to cause illness in our animals at home:

Chocolate: A favorite and irresistible treat amongst most humans, chocolate is considered toxic to dogs. In very small amounts it is usually not a huge issue, but with larger volumes and with darker chocolates pet owners should be concerned. Chocolate contains methylxanthine theobromine, which is similar to caffeine. Chocolate ingestion can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, issues with normal heartbeats, seizures, and in some severe cases, death. It is best to keep your favorite chocolate treats in a good hiding spot and out of reach of your dog or cat.

Grapes and raisins: Dogs should not consume grapes and raisins because of the risk of acute kidney failure. Most dogs experiencing grape or raisin toxicity will begin to have vomiting and/or diarrhea within 6-12 hours of ingestion. Other abnormal clinical signs include lethargy, abdominal pain, dehydration, and tremors. Kidney failure develops within 24-72 hours of the initial ingestion. There are some dogs that do not experience these devastating side effects. It is best to contact your veterinarian or veterinary emergency facility if you believe your pet has ingested grapes or raisins.

Garlic and onions: We often forget that our meals contain these two popular ingredients and will allow our furry companions a few bites or licks. Onion and garlic both can cause a type of poisoning that results in damage to red blood cells, making them more likely to rupture. They can also cause stomach upset and mouth irritation. Look for pale gums, increased breathing or drooling or any vomiting or diarrhea.

Bread dough: Unbaked bread dough is considered poisonous to our pets. The bread dough, when ingested, expands in the stomach because of the warm and moist environment. This can lead to a bloated or even twisted stomach. In addition yeast is often added to our baking products to help get bread to rise, and when this yeast is fermented it produces both carbon dioxide and alcohol.

How I Became a Pet Rescuer

By: Erica Sofrina



• Twenty five years ago an angel woman stopped to pick up my sister's dog on the side of the freeway. Laiya was not moving and appeared to be dead, but the woman got out, wrapped the dog in blankets, lifted her into her car and drove her to the nearest animal shelter, then waited to see if she would be OK. Laiya was a medium-sized Shepard-Coyote mix so it must have been no small feat to get her into the car. After about a half hour Laiya woke up. She had been hit by a car but was only stunned. My sister who had left her in a locked back yard of a friend for only a few hours, had been frantically searching for her. Laiya must have known the direction she had gone and was on the freeway headed toward my sister.

• Later that evening the animal shelter called and said that her dog had been brought to them by a woman who found her by the side of the freeway. They said she had stayed with her until she knew she was going to be OK. Laiya was one of those human-like dogs whom none of us will ever forget. She and my sister were joined at the hip. I don't think my sister could have survived if Laiya had been killed. She was beside herself with guilt and anguish.

• My sister was able to find the good Samaritan to thank her. When asked why she stopped in the night on a dangerous freeway to pick up a strange dog who appeared to be dead, she simply replied, "I would hope someone would do this for me. I am an animal lover and my pets are everything to me." My sister sent her flowers and a card every year on that memorable anniversary. The miraculous story became part of our family lore and was shared over and over. She was known to us as Laiya's Angel.

• I remember thinking at the time what an extraordinary person she was. I felt a deep shame because I knew I probably wouldn't have stopped under those circumstances. That was then, but life sent me a painful lesson, and I made the transformation from someone who loved animals but didn't take action (unless it was convenient), to someone who goes out of their way to help a pet in need.

• About 15 years ago, I went along with my sister to visit her friend's pottery studio in the coastal town of Half Moon Bay where I live. On the fence was an abandoned kitten, sneezing

and shivering. My sister's friend said she was hoping someone would come along and take care of her. I secretly wondered why she wasn't taking her in but didn't know her well enough to suggest the possibility.

• Being a life-long lover of cats, I yearned to take her. The resistance I had came from my (former) husband who was allergic to, and hated cats — always a bone of contention between us. In those days I was a total people-pleaser, afraid of rocking the boat in my already rocky marriage. Feeling horribly torn but too spineless to do what I knew was right, I walked away.

• The searing guilt of not having taken the kitten tore me up. I prayed continually that someone else would come along to help, trying to justify to myself my "impossible" situation. I finally called my sister and asked if she knew anything about the kitten. She told me that her friend called and said that it had crawled up into a truck engine that night to get warm and suffered a gruesome death the next day.

• The news hit me like a body blow. How could this happen?, I railed at the universe. Why didn't you send someone to help? Then the most astonishing thing happened, from a place deep within me it was as if I heard a voice say "I did send someone..... and it was you."

• There was the terrible truth staring me in the face. It was for me to do, and I walked away. And because of my cowardice she was dead. I had always thought that my path to saving the world or doing a good deed would come with great fanfare, sort of like Joan of Arc hearing the call from God. I would then stop everything and do the good thing when the need was presented. I never figured it might show up when it was terribly inconvenient and would require sacrifice.

• Shortly thereafter my new conviction was put to the test. I was driving in a bad neighborhood in Oakland, California when an itty-bitty puppy darted into traffic. Terrified and confused, it circled back and forth among the speeding cars.

• It happened so fast. I questioned whether I had actually seen anything at all. Besides, I was all dressed up in my white business suit and already late for an appointment. This was not a convenient time to be rescuing a puppy and what on earth would I do with it once I did? Here it was again, the voice justifying why I should not act. But this time I saw it more clearly, and the pain of doing nothing was freshly seared into my memory. This was not a dress rehearsal and I was aware that I was being given a second chance.

• I instantly circled around the block praying intently that I would find him before it was too late. I couldn't bear it if he had come to the same tragic end. Thankfully there he was, still frantically darting around in the street.

5 Tips for Adopting Shelter Animals

By: Veronica Peterson



• Fido, Snowball or Goldie—no matter the critter, study after study shows that pets are good for our health. Their unconditional love and wonderful kindness reduce our stress levels and increase our serotonin intake. Sadly, fewer than half of family pets live out their lives with their original families. That's an estimated seven million animals entering our shelter system every year, many simply through the irresponsibility of careless owners. If you're thinking of adopting an animal for yourself or your family, here are some tips:

- Avoid impulses "There are so many great (shelter) dogs and cats in need of a home," says Babara Savidge, owner of Olive: Green Goods for Modern Dogs. "That said, don't be completely swayed by a cute face. Take some time to think about what's important to you in a pet. Make a list of what you want, what you don't want, and what you can compromise on—before you even look. A little pre-thought will go a long way to ensuring a good fit for both parties."
- Meet Your Match. More than 250 shelters across the U.S. use a "Meet your Match" program. The potential owners are required to fill out lengthy questionnaires stating desires and behaviors. In this way, the more knowledgeable handlers at the shelters can point the owners in the direction of a breed or animal that would suit their lifestyle well. Occasionally, owners are introduced to breeds that they never would have considered, helping "less-popular" pets find loving homes.
- Rely on the shelter workers for advice and knowledge. Many pet stores view each pet as a potential sale, while the shelter workers, often volunteers, are invested in every animal they help and want to find the placement that will work best for all parties.
- Do your research. Just because you live in an apartment doesn't mean you can't adopt. "Several large breed dogs,

older dogs and cats are well-suited to apartment life," says Shannon Boyer of the Arizona Animal Welfare League. "These animals are pretty sedentary and are very happy and healthy with just a couple short walks each day."

- Introduce your current pets. Many shelters will allow you to bring your current pets into the environment to ensure that everyone feels comfortable with the new addition. If your adoptee is shy, many shelters have programs that will help with training and socializing.
- Remember, you are now responsible for a life so this is not a decision to be taken lightly. Consider the pros and cons. Are you ready for both the work and rewards that come with owning a pet?

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Qian Huang, Silver and Rose, oil.

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Choosing the Right Size Reef Aquarium

Courtesy of www.petcha.com

The size of your reef tank determines how you will stock it.



Among the first considerations in planning the construction of any aquarium system is tank size. This is certainly understandable, as most of us have to work within some kind of limitations with regard to space or budget. For those restricted primarily by the amount of available floor space (and perhaps working space) for the aquarium itself, the decision can be made rather quickly and simply with the use of a common tape measure. On the other hand, for those who must work within the restrictions of a budget (even a generous one), the answer is far less self-evident. This is particularly so for the beginning reef hobbyist, who may not yet fully realize what kind of commitment they are getting themselves into.

One of the things that you will likely be told when visiting your local fish store as a prospective tank buyer is that bigger is better. There is certainly some truth to this assertion. Most

notably, larger systems tend to be more stable. That is, they resist wild fluctuations in temperature throughout the day, will take longer to sour if a dead animal is left to rot in the tank unnoticed, will not experience sharp changes in salinity with evaporation/top-off, and so on. Stability is critical if you are to successfully recreate the relatively static environmental conditions of a tropical coral reef. Moreover, with larger systems (100 gallons+), the keeper has a much broader range of suitable species to choose from. The animals will not only have more room to grow, but will also have a greater selection of territories or hiding places to choose from and can more easily flee an aggressive tankmate.

Reef aquaria—regardless of size—are costly. Adequately equipping and maintaining them is even more costly. Therefore, being able to set (and stick to) a monthly budget is perhaps

even more important as meeting ones budget for the initial purchase and installation. Just think about that for a moment. Month after month, week after week, day after day you will be feeding the fish, performing water changes, changing light bulbs, replacing filter media, etc. The size of the aquarium will have a direct influence on how much these ongoing expenses will actually cost. Too often (typically after a windfall like a tax return), an aquarist will purchase a tank of the largest size that they can "afford" at that time, only to watch its inhabitants languish over the following months as the keeper is incapable or unwilling to spend what is required for the regular upkeep. Aquarium systems of this type, generally equipped with sub-standard lighting, filter components, etc., are a staple of garage sales and In short, a healthy reef aquarium is much preferable to unhealthy reef aquaria of any size. With this in mind, be sure to include all necessary components of a conventional reef aquarium when establishing the initial budget. This means that certain pieces of equipment with a proven high level of utility (e.g. protein skimmers and UV sterilizers) should not be eschewed as "optional." Furthermore, you should buy only quality equipment from a reputable manufacturer. You might wonder if you really need these things if you just have a small system; the short answer is that you will certainly need them because your system is small. Will this cut deeply into the budget allotment for the tank and cabinetry? It absolutely will, and that is the point. And just the same, make sure that there is room in your monthly budget to keep up with regular maintenance as well as for emergencies.

Undoubtedly, a responsible and well-informed aquarist can successfully keep many reef species, including stony corals, in a smallish aquarium system. The growing popularity of so-called nano tanks (often defined as systems under 15 or 20 gallons) is certainly evidence of that. But, again, it is typically far less problematic to house these delicate creatures in larger aquaria. For one, it is much simpler to install a sump/overflow system in a tank that is at least, say, 55 gallons in size. An overflow will help to eliminate films on the water surface that inhibit gas exchange and reduce light penetration. Additionally, the sump itself can significantly increase the total aquarium system water volume and, thus, level of stability. Yet another factor here is the transfer of thermal energy from equipment such as lighting. Remember, many soft and stony corals alike require very strong illumination; even some of the most efficient types of aquarium lighting fixtures generate a considerable amount of heat, to the detriment of many species. This can create the need for a chiller, which might cost more than the rest of the entire aquarium system.

These days, many smaller aquarium systems can be purchased as "plug-and-play" units that incorporate most, but seldom all, important components. These can be a great choice for hobbyists who for reasons of either space or budget restrictions must opt for a very small tank. For one, the components are of course made to fit the unit; trying to fit a mix of components from different manufacturers into a nano-sized tank can sometimes be a nightmare due to the tight spaces in their fil-

ter compartments or sumps. And, by purchasing all of the components together, one has a chance of obtaining them at package-deal pricing. Do note, however, that the quality of these nominally "all-in-one" systems varies greatly, and that many are downright unsuitable (despite the manufacturer's claims) for most reef aquarium species.

To be clear, there really is no formula for the perfect or absolute minimum size of reef aquarium. There are simply too many factors at play. Number of animals (e.g. bioload), species composition, even the feeding habits of the keeper can be at play here. The best way to ensure success (i.e. provide a consistently healthy captive environment for your livestock) is to purchase the largest system that you can afford to properly equip and maintain over time.



Cat Stories

Courtesy of www.lovemeow.com

Soldier Saves Afghan Cat: ‘He Was My Saving Grace’

Staff Sergeant Jesse Knotts rescued a stray cat whom he named Koshka while he was serving in Afghanistan, but it was really the kitty who saved him from the difficult times during his service.

“He was showing some signs that people weren’t taking very good care of him,” Knotts said. He brought the kitty in his tiny office and made it home for Koshka. “The cat was a reminder of his life back home in Oregon City,” KPTV.com reported.

“You lose faith in a lot but sometimes it’s the smallest things that bring you back,” Knotts added. An experience he had with a suicide bomber targeted a military convoy near his base in the Maiwand District of Afghanistan took away two of his friends. He was devastated and crying in his office then Koshka hopped onto his lap to give him the comfort and love that he would normally get from his loved ones back home.

“I’d lost hope in myself. I’d lost faith. Then all of a sudden this cat came over and it was like ‘hey, you are you,’ he said via KPTV.

He knew there is no way he could leave Koshka in Afghanistan. The little kitty is more than just a cat to him. Koshka is like family to Knotts.

“He pulled me out of one of my darkest times so I had to pull him out of one of his darkest places.”

It was impossible for Knotts to get Koshka on a military convoy. He received help from a local interpreter who risked his life to take the cat to Kabul where

they were able to fly the cat from the Middle East all the way to Portland, Oregon. It cost his parents \$3,000 for the flight home, but “for them, it was an easy investment.”

“He was my saving grace. He kept me alive during the tour,” Knotts said (KPTV).



At that moment, Knotts knew that he couldn’t leave the cat in Afghanistan



A local interpreter risked his life to help Knotts bring his cat to Kabul and eventually they were able to fly the cat all the way to his new home in Oregon. Happy and loved

Rescue Kitten Finds Golden Retriever Who Becomes the Father She Never Had

Ichimi the kitten was rejected by her own mother but accepted by a Golden Retriever dog who started caring for the little rescue since the day he laid eyes on her.

Ponzu the Golden Retriever is a very nurturing dog who has fostered little kittens

and always has a soft spot for the little needy ones. After losing his previous foster kitten, he was heart broken until he found Ichimi, an orphan who was in need of some motherly love.

Ponzu uses his body heat to keep the little kitten warm and comfy. He cleans the kitten and helps the fosterer during and after feeding. He has become the father she never had.

Ichimi the kitten was rejected by her own mother but taken in by a Golden Retriever who started caring for her since the day he saw her.



Ponzu the dog used his body to keep the kitten warm and comfy.



Snuggling together for a nap. Ichimi is very loved.

Ponzu is very protective of his little kitten and wouldn't leave her out of his sight.



...and is always there for her every step of the way.



This is Ichimi's first winter and her very own snowman.



Ichimi loves Ponzu, who has become the father she never had.

Things Veterinarian Technicians Wish You Knew

By Laura Miller

Contributor Sierra Gutierrez, LVT



Whether you are a pet owner visiting a veterinarian clinic, or thinking about becoming a Veterinarian Technician (Vet Tech), here are some things you should know.

Just because you love animals, doesn't mean being a Vet Tech is the right job for you. Other considerations include: Mastering the technical knowledge, working well with people, and being able to manage the stress and emotional aspects of the job. For instance, if you are unable to think and react quickly to stabilize a pet who has arrived traumatized, you likely won't last long in this profession, while others who might be initially shocked, will acclimate to the stress over time. Ultimately, you will need to love what you do enough to not let the job effect you in a negative way.

Pros of Being a Vet Tech

- Educating clients so they can do the best for their pet is rewarding, especially since many preventive services, like heartworm medication, can potentially extend the pet's life.
- Utilizing the technical skills gained in school to not only troubleshoot an issue with a pet, but also mentor a colleague, creates a sense of pride.
- It is rewarding to look back at the patients you influenced and ensured they received everything they needed.
- Seeing a pet who wasn't expected to survive, but does, can create an immense sense of satisfaction. A pet owner's reaction when their dog does pull through is priceless.
- For animals who have long-term diseases, seeing the look of appreciation on a pet's face when making them comfortable is comforting.
- Seeing the excitement pets get when they can now do something they haven't been able to do before or for a long

time, like going for a walk, is bliss.

- There are opportunities to go into different specialty areas so that you don't get bored. Each area of expertise also provides different pay levels.
- Vet Techs who work in ICU, usually don't get as much interaction with the owners, but it's always nice to see how appreciative the owners are when they visit their pet in the ICU.

Cons of Being a Vet Tech

- When owners can't afford the necessary health care for their pet, it is frustrating; especially since preventive medication, like heartworm, can save the owner money in the long run. Sometimes, it's because the owners just don't understand the importance of providing certain care for their pet.
- Owners can treat the Veterinarian staff poorly because they want to talk to the Veterinarian directly instead. However, when owners bypass the process, a lot of knowledge and time is lost, which ultimately negatively affects the pet - this is because Vet Techs have more time than the Veterinarian to write up the full history for the veterinarian's review. Also, by compiling a comprehensive write-up, the Vet Tech can make better observations on how the pet is progressing and what decisions to make, especially once the Veterinarian leaves for the day.
- Some owners like to tell you their life story which takes up unnecessary time. For these situations, try to divert the owner by taking the dog to the back to get their vitals or tell the owner that the Veterinarian should be there soon. Although it's best not to cut off the client too early, you do want to keep clients on schedule as much as possible.
- There's not much time for bathroom breaks or meals. Usually, Vet Techs are constantly running around due to the endless number of tasks that need to be done including: Surgeries, nursing care, pet recovery, working with owners, grooming, walking/feeding, handling unexpected injuries, and walk-ins, etc. A typical work week includes at least 10 hours a day, 5 days a week.
- The emotional toll the job takes never goes away. On the days when everything seems to go wrong, the Vet Tech will not only be emotionally drained, but can find themselves physically affected with body aches, and being fatigued. To help combat the physical and emotional toll, always try to get a full 8 hours of sleep. Each Vet Tech will want to find some way to deal with the stress that works best for them. Some build up an emotional wall to protect themselves. This is especially true for euthanasia cases which Vet Techs will be assisting the Veterinarian.
- The Vet Tech career usually only lasts about 10 years due to burn out and low pay. Vet Techs are paid hourly, so even with raises, the pay is still limited.

What Vet Techs Wish Owners Knew

- The entire veterinarian staff is very busy, so it takes time away from other clients when owners call constantly for updates about their pet, especially when their pet is stable. The veterinarian staff will notify you if something does change.
- Be honest, and provide as much information as possible regarding what may have caused your pet's medical situation. For example, if your dog got into a batch of pot brownies, tell the veterinarian staff so that they can properly treat the pet. Don't worry about being judged by the staff; they just want to help your pet.
- Most veterinarian clinics accept both appointments and walk-ins (walk-ins are taken in between appointments). If you come in late, you will likely have to wait because a walk-in came in during your appointment. The veterinarian staff is unable to stand around and wait for owners to show up for their appointment at the expense of other animals in need. At the very least, notify the staff if you will be running late. Even if you're on time, your appointment could be delayed because the people before you didn't show up on time, which causes a trickle-down effect. That is why it is important to be on time.
- It is not the Vet Tech's job to provide ongoing grooming. For instance, if you would like your pet groomed multiple times a day, talk to a member of the veterinarian staff about hiring a groomer to provide these services to the pet while at the clinic. The grooming that usually falls under a Vet Tech's role includes nail trims and shaving areas to either prepare for surgery or to place in an IV.
- If you have ever wondered why the Vet Tech took your dog from the examining room to the back room, it is because they are usually just doing blood work, weighing the pet, and getting other additional information before they return the pet to you in the examining room.
- If you don't have funds to provide the necessary care for your pet's needs, talk to the veterinarian staff about alternative options like less expensive versions of the medication, possible package deals the clinic offers, or medication rebates that some pet companies may offer.
- Vet Techs can request the Veterinarian to provide more information and advice if you are stressed out.
- Empathy and patience goes a long way on both sides of the desk!

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Sierra Gutierrez is a Licensed Veterinarian Technician and is in the process of getting into one of only 28 veterinarian schools in the Country.

Laura Miller is the founder and owner of Creature Comfort Pet Services which provides a variety of pet services including: pet boarding, and certified services for dog training, equine massage, and dog massage. Laura also creates educational content through blogs, newsletters, and articles with publication partners. More information about these topics can be found on current and future blog topics at: <http://creaturecomfortpetservices.com/blog/>



Recipe for a Beautiful Coat for Your Dog or Cat

Courtesy of www.thewholepetdiet.com



Shedding, Itching, Scratching, Allergies, Dull Coat and Dandruff? Your pets have been back and forth to the vet's office for cortisone shots and steroids? There's not a flea in sight, but your dog keeps digging, licking and biting at his paws all day long? You've tried all kinds of shots and medications and you've been told that it's just an "allergy" and that lots of pets have them? Well, if any of these scenarios sound like your household then this next recipe is a must for every dog and cat. In five to ten days you can STOP THE MADNESS!

I can honestly tell you that the real cause of the problem is rarely addressed and will continue to manifest unless you understand how our holistic approach addresses the cause and not just masks the symptoms.

First of all, the typical culprit is usually dry food. Remember that the reason they call dry food "dry", is because it's all dried out. The skin dries out, the coat dries out and the digestive system dries out. It's just that simple. Pet food makers cook and process their ingredients at such high temperatures that they wind up cooking out the beneficial fats and oils that are so critical to healthy skin and coat. What we know is that the skin is the largest organ of the body. It is also an eliminative organ and will struggle to release the toxic waste from the body (chemicals and toxins). You might never even know if there are chemicals or preservatives in the so-called natural foods you may be buying, unless you're actually having the food tested through a food science laboratory. Sadly, pet food makers are notorious for not declaring certain ingredients on their labels. If the pet food maker buys their meats, grains or vegetables with preservatives already in it, as long as they don't add it themselves at the packaging point, they don't have to declare it on the label. Lots of pet companies actually hide unscrupulous ingredients in their products and many people are fooled into thinking that they're feeding a better quality food than they really are.

So what can you do? Well, of course I have always recommended feeding a healthy, homemade stew diet to begin with. For those of us who are "time challenged", now there's nothing better than my own Doc's Stew (in a can, already made as if you had made it yourself!). But even if you can't, but hopefully you are; here is a wonderful supplement that will supply all the ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS, along with Vitamins A, D and E, which are so important to promote healthy skin and coat.

Here's how to make it:

Andi's Best In Coat Favorite Recipe Makes 8 ounces
3 ounces of wild salmon oil
1 ounce of extra virgin olive oil
1 ounce of cod liver oil
1 ounce of wheat germ oil
1 ounce of coconut oil
1 ounce of flaxseed oil
1 inch sprig of rosemary, or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried rosemary

Directions:

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor and pulse for 30 seconds. Pour into a dark or opaque glass bottle or jar and seal tightly. Store in the refrigerator for freshness where it will keep for about 2 months. Serving sizes are based on body weight; use the dosage recommended below and thoroughly mix it into your pet's food at every meal.

Pet's Weight	- Amount of EFA Blend
2 to 11 pounds	- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon
12 to 25 pounds	- 1 teaspoon
26 to 50 pounds	- 2 teaspoons
51 to 100 pounds	- 1 tablespoon

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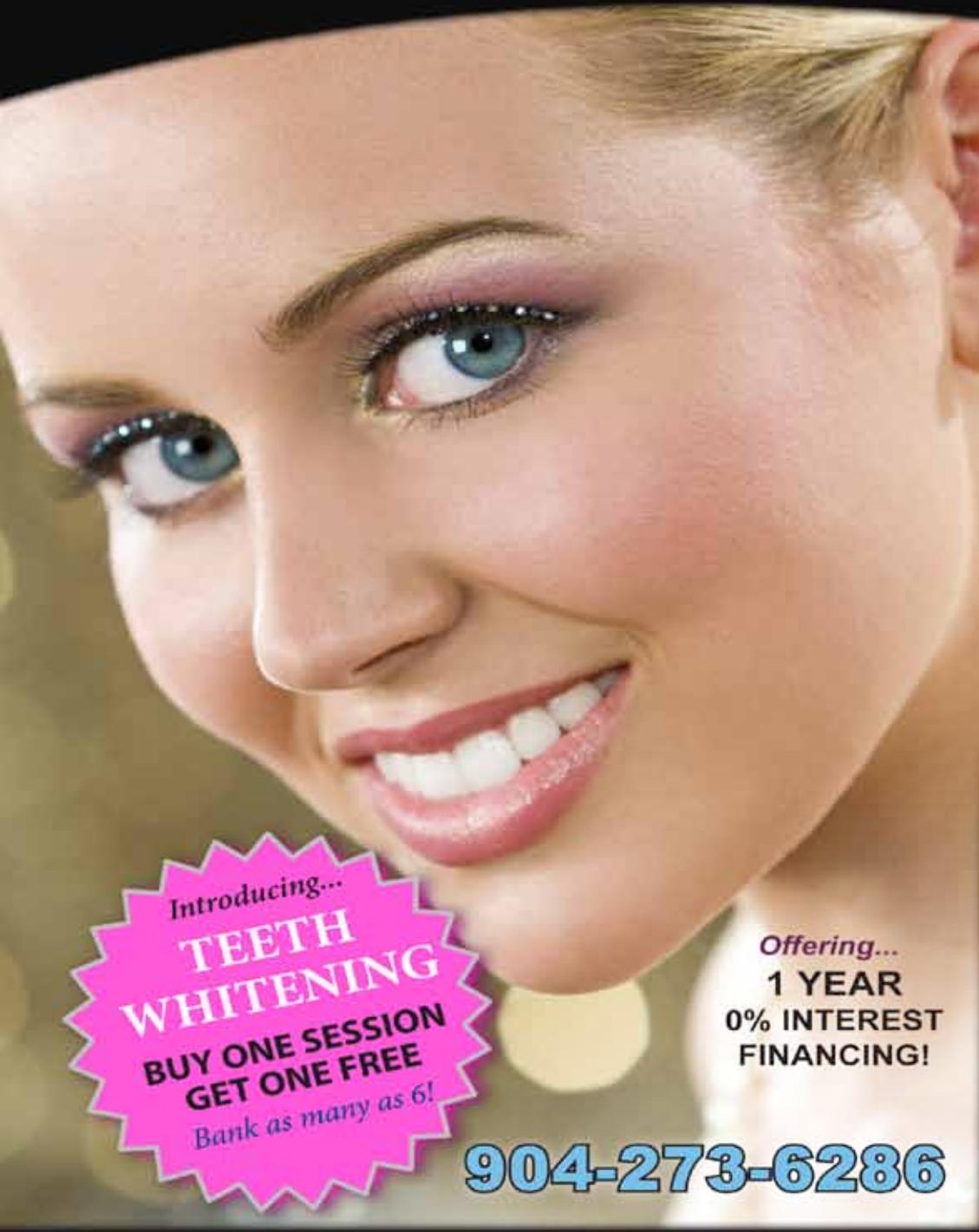
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