

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What nature designed our pets to eat	1
The problem with commercial pet foods	3
Not their natural diet	3
Quality problems	4
Questionable ingredients	5
Raw food for pets	6
Risks of raw feeding	8
How to switch to a raw diet	9
How to read pet food labels	10
Pet food recall	12
What is safe to feed our pets?	12
Obesity in pets	14
Human foods toxic to our pets	18
Are Greenies safe for dogs?	19
Greenies Update: Greenies Reformulated	21
Conclusions	22
Resources	23
Books	23
Articles	24
Websites	24
Holistic cat information	24
Whole food products for animals (supplements)	24

Introduction

There is a saying that people who cannot find time for recreation are obliged sooner or later to find time for illness. We have our own saying that people who cannot find the time or money to feed their pet properly are obliged sooner or later to find the time and money for vet visits. Good nutrition is the foundation of good health in both people and our pets. You can pay now for high quality food for your pets or pay later for health care costs when they become ill. Despite the glowing commercials by pet food companies showing healthy animals bouncing around, much commercial pet food is not very healthy for our pets. We will explain the reasons for this and suggest some solutions on how to save your dog or cat from becoming a statistic.



Our pets these days have a high rate of cancer and other degenerative diseases, like arthritis, kidney disease and liver disease. According to Veterinary Pet Insurance, “The Nation’s #1 Pet Medical Insurance Plan,” nearly half of all dogs and cats will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. (See www.petinsurance.com). They state that “dogs and cats are three times more likely than people to contract cancer and 45 percent of dogs die from it.” Cancer is now occurring not just in older animals but in quite young ones, even puppies. What is causing this high incidence of cancer? Is it just that pets are living longer due to medical advances? Or are there other factors at work?

Our pets are not only dying of cancer but are dying younger. We think it is ‘normal’ now for large dogs to die at 10–12 years of age but before the advent of commercial pet foods, when they ate table scraps and raw bones from the butcher, they would often live to 20 years of age or more. The claims of commercial pet foods to be “complete and balanced” are based on short feeding trials and limited research. Perhaps pet foods are not as healthy as the ads proclaim.

People who cannot find the time or money to feed their pet properly are obliged sooner or later to find the time and money for vet visits.

Many experts in the holistic health field feel that the high incidence of cancer and other degenerative diseases in our pets are caused not by longer lives but by a variety of factors that include poor breeding practices, over vaccination and the diet we feed our pets.

What nature designed our pets to eat

When determining the best food to feed our pets, it makes sense to look at what their bodies were designed to eat by Mother Nature. Dogs and cats are carnivorous (meat-eating) animals. The diet that they have thrived on for thousands of years is primarily raw meat and bones. Dogs are naturally predators and carrion (dead meat) eaters. Their ancestors are wolves and they still have the digestive



tract of a wolf, even if they look cuter on the outside. The natural diet of wolves and wild dogs is game, rodents, birds, eggs, fruit, root vegetables, berries, seeds and nuts. Dogs can survive as vegetarians though this is not their natural diet. In nature they eat 60 to 80 percent meat (protein + fat) and minimal grains. The grains they do eat are fermented in the stomach of their prey and wolves will often pass on eating the stomach, preferring other meatier parts of the animal and organs.

Cats are “obligate carnivores”, meaning they must have meat to survive. They are physiologically just as wild as a tiger, when it comes to what they are designed to eat. The holistic cat veterinarian Dr. Jean Hofve calls her website www.LittleBigCat.com, meaning that our domestic cats are the same physiologically as the big wild cats. Cats need 70 to 95 percent meat (protein + fat) in their diet and cannot survive as vegetarians. If you want to feed your pet a vegetarian diet, we would suggest acquiring a pet that is naturally a vegetarian, such as a rabbit or guinea pig. Forcing a cat to be a vegetarian is cruel, since their bodies require meat. Domestic cats are descended from the African wild cat, whose natural diet included rodents, birds, eggs, reptiles and insects. They got their moisture from their food and not drinking water, as they lived in the desert. Their prey contains 65 to 75 percent water. Cats do not have a strong thirst drive compared to other mammals so they will not drink water until they are already dehydrated.



Cats must have meat to survive and the wild cat did not eat grains.

This wild cat was domesticated by the Egyptians 4,000 years ago to protect their granaries from rodents. The cat was ideally suited to this task, since it **did not eat grains**. Yet today, we feed our cats dry kibble that contain more grains than meat and only averages 10 percent water. **Could this be why so many cats get kidney disease or Chronic Renal Failure (CRF)?**

Another way to determine what nature designed our pets to eat is to look at their teeth and digestive tract. This is how biologists determine what an animal is designed to eat. Nature gives herbivores grinding teeth for mashing up plant foods, a multi-chambered stomach for fermenting plants (for ruminant herbivores such as a cow or goat) and a long intestinal tract for breaking down plant foods. Also, herbivores have the enzyme cellulase which breaks down the walls of plant cells. Carnivores get sharp pointy teeth for killing their prey and then tearing the meat off the bone. They may have some molars for crushing bones but they don't have flat surfaces for grinding plant material. They have a single stomach with a high acid level for breaking down meat and bones quickly and a short intestinal tract to quickly digest the meat while giving bacteria and parasites minimal time to set up housekeeping. They lack the enzyme cellulase because most of the plant material they get is from the digestive tract of their prey so it is already broken down. Omnivores, like humans, have something in between these two extremes. Dogs and cats have the teeth and digestive tract of carnivores—cats more extreme than dogs.

Dogs and cats have teeth for tearing meat not grinding grains or carbohydrates.