

## The Benefits of Grain-Free Food

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Over the last several years, the popularity and selection of grain-free foods has exploded. Why?

- Grain-free foods are low on the glycemic index which helps to stabilize your pet's blood sugar and control diabetes and other health conditions.
- Many pets are allergic to grain and many holistic Veterinarians believe grains contribute to cancerous growths.
- High grain / high carb diets also tend to cause dogs to be overweight, loose muscle mass, and suffer from lack of quality protein, just like in people.

Whole grains are not inherently bad, but low quality commercial pet foods use glutens from corn and wheat as the primary ingredient, with meat (usually by-products) in low quantities.

Because of the heavy input of poor quality grains in commercial foods, our pets' immune systems have been overexposed to grain. This causes many pets to develop allergies to grains over the years. Another "side effect" of the large consumption of grain is an increase of urinary tract infections in cats and dogs.

For cats, grains in the diet are particularly undesirable because they create an alkaline Ph in their bodies. Because cats are obligate carnivores, they *should* eat a diet that is high in meat content (which contributes to the desired acidic urinary Ph), even when they are seniors. When a cat's Ph climbs into the alkaline, Struvite crystals can form leading to a urinary tract infection which, of course, leads to massive veterinary bills. By feeding a grain-free, high meat content food, you will help your cat maintain the proper Ph which will, in most cases, maintain good urinary tract health.

Conversely, dogs and their evolutionary ancestors, wolves, are opportunistic feeders and they tolerate a variety of foods, so their Ph can tolerate more fluctuation. A small amount of high quality whole grains is tolerated by many dogs.

Senior pets actually require more protein as they age to maintain muscle mass which in turn helps support their joints and mobility. The myth that high protein causes kidney damage in dogs and cats is completely untrue. Recent studies have concluded that high protein diets do not cause kidney disease. The more likely culprits in kidney disease are pesticides, toxins, preservatives, and medications.

In addition, active dogs participating in agility, flyball or other strenuous athletic activities can benefit from grain-free foods because they tend to be higher in protein and they help maintain muscle mass and lean bodies, resulting less likelihood of injury.

If you have questions regarding your pet's diet, the staff at Holistic for Pets can help you choose the best food for your pet.