



A Veterinary Guide
to
The Holistic Feeding of Dogs

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1. Introduction

All domestic dogs are descended from one species of animal. Every breed of modern dog from the Chihuahua to the Great Dane shares the basic physiology and psychology of one common ancestor — the wolf (*Canis lupus*). The many species of domestic dogs in existence today are all a result of man's selective breeding of the wild wolf over a period of some 12,000 years, a miniscule amount of time when compared to the millions of years it took for the species to evolve. Despite this process of domestication, which has modified the musculo-skeletal shape of the animal, its basic physiology is the same as the wolf. It is difficult to imagine that its nutritional requirements have changed to any great degree in such a short space of time.

Despite the fact that dogs should be given food which reflects that of his wild ancestors, for around fifty years, dog foods have not reflected this principle. The modern dog food industry often uses entirely unsuitable ingredients which have led the increase of a host of diet related problems. The main problems have been associated with not enough of the right raw materials and too many of the wrong types.

2. The principles of Holistic Feeding

The natural diet of dogs in the wild is mainly other animals, usually herbivores, which the pack has brought down and killed. The victim is consumed in entirety and nothing much remains - meat, bones, skin, stomach contents, intestines, hooves and all is devoured. Dogs are omnivorous; they also take fruit and berries and dig for roots, as well as taking rodents and other small animals – but the bulk of the diet is from eating large herbivores.

In nutritional terms, this diet may be broken down into its main components as –

Meat – for protein

Muscle meat is most eagerly devoured as the best source of easily digestible protein.

Carbohydrate – for energy

Carbohydrates are obtained from the stomach of the prey. They are readily digested by the dog because they have already been broken down by the digestive juices of the victim.

Vegetable matter – for vitamins minerals and other essential elements.

This consists of a range of vegetable and herb species that are also available from the stomach of the dogs prey in a pre-digested form.

Whilst this image may not be comfortable reading, it is explained here in order to provide a focus for the principle of Holistic Feeding; it has been the natural way of feeding for the wolf since antiquity and therefore should be used as a basis for the diet of the domesticated dog. As with any species, there may be health risks involved through deviation from evolved nutritional requirements

3. Nutrition and health

- The body strives to be in good health – it is the natural state.
- Wild animals manage perfectly well without nutritionists and veterinary surgeons.
- Good health comes from within but there is no good health without good nutrition.
- The cause of diseases is usually multi-factorial, but good nutrition is one of the cornerstones of prevention and a major factor in cure.
- The body will heal itself if it can. This is conditional on nutrition being optimal.
- Symptoms of illness are signs that the body is attempting to heal itself. Many minor clues to unbalanced nutrition are ignored. For example things such as itching and diarrhoea are a sign that the body is trying to get rid of toxins.
- If symptoms are ignored or suppressed, chronic illness often ensues.
- Holistic Feeding not only maintains robust health but it is used by holistic veterinary surgeons for the prevention, and as part of the treatment, of many ailments.
- Holistic medicine focuses on nutritional therapy using Holistic Feeding principles as part of the treatment. Modern medicine largely concentrates on the symptoms without addressing the cause.

Green Pantry Foods

Green Pantry foods are complete and reflect the natural diet of the dog. All nutrients, including vitamins and pro-vitamins, are inherent in the raw materials. It is made from a high percentage human grade muscle meat, properly balanced carbohydrates, vegetables and herbage with nothing added. Our products are unique in that they were the first of their type to be introduced which, when fed as part of an holistic lifestyle, have the capacity to assist in the control of intestinal and external hygiene. They are made from 100% whole natural nutrients and unlike most modern pet foods they can be properly and safely digested

- We use Holistic feeding principles in our formulations
- We use products of organic farming methods
- We use pet dogs belong to members of the public as our 'tasting panel'
- We use products from local suppliers if possible
- We support animal – free laboratory testing
- We only use products which can be properly digested
-
- X We do not use products from inhumane farming systems
- X We do not use synthetic E Numbers of any description for product preservation, fortification, taste enhancement or appearance or for any other reason.
- X We do not use laboratory animals for testing
- X We do not use unsuitable by-products

4. The problems with many modern pet foods

The main problem with most commercially produced pet foods is they contain too much of the wrong sorts of ingredients and not enough of the right sort. This is because the pet food manufacturing business developed as a 'by-product' industry. This means that it uses a highly formulated approach to nutrition, rather than a whole-food approach. Although some foods are better than others, most leave a lot to be desired from a Holistic Feeding standpoint. The main problems are associated with the following areas:

- Artificial additives
- Unsuitable by-products
- Too much wheat and/or poor carbohydrate balance.
- Not enough herbage

Artificial additives

These are not metabolised by the body as well as holistic ingredients and can interfere with the uptake of natural micronutrients. They are associated with sensitivity reaction and hyperactivity. They are generally used to preserve the food, make poor ingredients more appealing to the taste, and to try and replace the natural vitamins lost in the manufacturing process. Even many so-called holistic and hypoallergenic products contain some of these.

By products

These are denatured products from the human food industry. Whilst some may have a nutritional value, their use generally means that the food has not been formulated using Holistic Feeding principles. Their use also indicates the need for synthetic products to be used in order to try and replace the lost elements.

Too much wheat and/or poor carbohydrate balance.

The dog's digestive system has evolved to utilise carbohydrates such as those from grain cereals but they must be appropriate. They should be from a variety of sources, properly cooked and probably not more than about one third of the diet for an adult dog in good health. For a number of years many dog food manufacturers used (and still use) wheat as the sole source of carbohydrate, and to add to the problem, wheat by-products were used. This was improperly cooked and included in disproportionately large amounts. The result of this has been the development of a host of digestive ailments, often grouped under the term Irritable Bowel Disease. Most dogs will recover from these types of problem if the digestive system is allowed to heal, which usually means simply readjusting the carbohydrate source.

Herbage

Traditional pastures contained hundreds of species of grasses and herbage, which is missing from today's grassland because of modern farming methods. The essential nutrients in this herbage were once available to the dog through the meat that it consumed. Many foods contain some vegetable but these generally do not mirror the natural requirements of the dog. nutrients in this herbage were once available to the dog through the meat that it consumed. Many foods contain some vegetable but these generally do not mirror the natural requirements of the dog.

5. Ailments associated with a poor diet

The physical effects of the continued use of a poorly conceived diet become progressively more difficult to reverse. The progression of events below is somewhat simplistic, because they often occur simultaneously to some degree, but it is a useful illustration. Relatively minor symptoms of nutritional imbalance (1) can be easily spotted early by the observant owner and the slide towards a disease scenario can usually be halted immediately by changing to Green Dog products.

The use of Holistic Food is also indicated for problems in (2) and (3) although veterinary intervention is usually also required to relieve the symptoms. The majority of cases respond well to herbal and other natural medicines in conjunction with Holistic Feeding however the veterinary surgeon must be qualified in holistic medicine to obtain the best results. We can advise on your nearest holistic veterinarian.

5.1. Relatively minor symptoms of nutritional imbalance / toxicity

The body can normally cope with short term imbalances. However when things go wrong – usually as a result of too many of the wrong things in the diet and not enough of the right things – the following relatively minor symptoms may be observed.

- Itching skin and ears
- Eating faeces
- Overweight
- Dull 'starey' coat, dandruff, offensive smell
- Listlessness
- Hyperactivity
- Occasional diarrhoea
- Occasional vomiting
- Loose voluminous mucous stools
- Constipation
- Biting or licking the feet or other parts of the body
- Impacted anal glands

- Concentrated strong smelling urine
- Bad breath
- Tooth tarter
- Wax in ears

These symptoms may not of themselves be symptoms of true illness, but they are signs that there is something wrong. The most common cause of these problems is incorrect diet.

5.2. Impaired function of bodily functions

If nothing is done about the situation, the build-up of toxins and lack of correct nutrients will begin to affect the proper functions of the body and the following problems may be observed –

- Allergic reactions – eczema, auto-immune disease
- Inflammatory reactions – pancreatitis, hepatitis
- Hormonal problems – infertility, irregular oestrus
- Musculo-skeletal problems – stiffness, rheumatism, arthritis
- Increased susceptibility to disease – immune suppression

5.3. Degeneration of major organ systems

If this is allowed to continue, major organ systems will be damaged affecting the animal's quality of life. The heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and other organs will begin to degenerate. Tumour formations are often present

6 Natural versus Synthetic Vitamins

Green Pantry products contain only naturally occurring herbal vitamins and minerals

It is not generally realised that artificial vitamins and minerals are added to most dog foods – even those sold as ‘natural’ products.

What are vitamins and minerals?

- Vitamins in their natural state are complex suites of chemical compounds, necessary in small amounts for the growth and good health of the body. They have many functions and, importantly, they act *synergistically*. There are many different types of vitamins. They are usually given letters e.g. A, B, C, D etc. and they are normally listed on food packaging.
- Minerals (also called trace elements) are also needed in very small amounts for the body to function properly. Minerals come from the earth and are processed by plants so that the body can utilise them properly. There are a large number of minerals - most of them are never mentioned on food packaging.

How do wild populations of animals get sufficient vitamins and minerals?

If the animal has access to a natural and varied diet, all the vitamins and minerals will be supplied in adequate and balanced levels in order to maintain optimal health.

Why are artificial vitamins and minerals added to dog foods?

It is a direct reflection on the raw materials and the manufacturing process used. Artificial vitamins and minerals will be added in order to try and replace the naturally occurring ones when.

- High levels of by-products are used, which are depleted of natural minerals and vitamins
- The raw materials have been over-processed – high temperatures will denature natural vitamins and minerals
- The finished product has to survive unstable storage conditions, e.g. during long transportation periods

Why are natural vitamins and minerals better than artificial ones ?

Natural vitamins and minerals

- Are more efficiently absorbed and optimally assimilated by the body
- Are far more stable than artificial vitamins and minerals

Artificial vitamins and minerals

- Can interfere with the body's uptake of natural vitamins and minerals
- Can cause reactions in some individuals
- Can be associated with nutritional imbalances

How can the use of artificial vitamins and minerals in dog food be avoided

Ensure naturally occurring vitamins and minerals are still nutritionally viable in the finished product through

- Exclusion of by-products
- Inclusion of whole raw materials that reflect the natural diet of the dog

6.1. Economy - optional extras

Green Pantry products can save you money and help the environment

Add table scraps and leftovers

If you have suitable left over's and table scraps occasionally available, they can be added to provide up to 20% of the diet. This will help maximise economy and recycling of food, which would otherwise go to waste, so you will also be doing your bit for the environment. This can represent a saving of 20% against the cost of other premium brands without compromising on quality.

Although, technically, Green Pantry is a complete natural diet in itself, dogs love and benefit from variety. Suitable extras could be made up with a range of fresh green vegetables, other types of meat and raw bones. Most processed food should be avoided as should sugar, dairy products and spicy food. Many owners give Green Dog products during the week and prepare other food for their dogs at the weekend when they have more time.

Vegetables

Suitable vegetables would be cabbage, sprouts, broccoli and other similar green varieties, plus soft fruit occasionally. All vegetables should be lightly cooked or liquidised otherwise the dog cannot digest them properly. Starchy root vegetables such as potato and parsnip should be kept to a minimum. Dairy products, salt, spicy, and sugary foods, should not be given.

Meat

Lamb, beef, boneless fish, chicken, plus other types of meat except pork, are all suitable. Raw minced whole chicken wings are an ideal treat.

Bones

Cooked bones should never be given and there are some rules about feeding bones, which are mostly common sense. Small splintery bones should be avoided if the dog is unused to eating them; also dogs which are likely to fight should not be left with a bone unsupervised. Large knucklebones are the best as they are less likely to cause problems and provide hours of entertainment.

General

Dogs should be fed either once or twice a day, and the amount given should vary. The dog should eat every scrap of food put in front of it in one sitting. If it does not the food should be taken away. Dogs should need no encouragement to eat good food. With the exception of elderly dogs and puppies, healthy animals should have food withheld completely for 24 hours every seven days or so. This may seem unkind but it suits the dog's physiology, which has evolved to cope with feast and famine. The dog's wild counterparts will gorge themselves and then go without food for some time. Fresh clean water should always be available (changed daily) and if this is hard or excessively chlorinated it should be boiled first and allowed to reach room temperature before putting it down for the dog. Food and water bowls should be made from glazed earthenware, pottery, china, stainless steel or enamel.

The amount of food a dog needs will vary depending on many factors and it is probably best to feed by 'eye'; if the dog is getting ribby' give more, if he is getting fat, give less. Add or subtract one quarter of food volume as appropriate until the desired effect has been achieved. Changes in weight should not happen quickly, and are best brought about over a period of around two to three months. Many are overweight, either because their owners are unaware of the fact, or because they do nothing about it, which is being unkind to the dog. The most natural and therefore the healthiest condition for a dog to be is lean and fit. One of the common causes of early demise in dogs is overweight.

7. Puppies and older dogs

7.1. Feeding puppies.

We suggest the following for puppies which is in keeping with Holistic Feeding principles to ensure a long and healthy life.

- As the bitch begins to wean her puppies slowly introduce Green Pantry to their diet by soaking the food in warm water to soften – very small puppies can bolt their food and dry kibble can occasionally become stuck in the throat.
- Growing puppies (as well as adult dogs) can be given minced raw or cooked meat which they love and which keeps the digestive flora in good order; add small amounts gradually, so as not to cause stomach upsets, keeping an eye on the stools (see stool chart). Work up to about 20% meat with about 80% Green Dog. White meat and fish are favourites as they are easy to digest. It is a good idea to vary the menu as this helps to build a robust digestive system, which will be less prone to intolerances and allergy.
- All puppies should also have bones, which provide extra calcium in the proper form, for their own bone development. Finely minced, raw whole chicken wings are an ideal daily addition to the diet, as they provide both meat and bone. When the puppy's teeth have become strong enough to crunch the bones, he can be given whole raw chicken wings and other raw meaty bones.
- Liquidised/par-boiled and cooled green vegetables are a valuable addition the diet, either daily or every few days. This can be made into a pulp or juice and used as gravy, or used to soak the kibble.
- Give larger raw (never cooked) bones to gnaw on and provide amusement.
- Your breeder will recommend total amounts to give per day, or email us.
- Other supplements should not be needed. If in doubt email us.

7.2. Feeding older dogs.

Green Pantry is the ideal primary part of the diet for all dogs because it is based on Holistic Feeding principles. Just as puppies need a higher input of certain nutrients as they are growing, older dogs need less as they begin to slow down. The addition of more green vegetables and into diet will have the right effect without reducing the volume too much. The amounts to give should be adjusted according to individual circumstances and judged according to the dog's overall weight and condition. Over-feeding is one of the biggest causes of early demise.

If the dog has been given foods based on Holistic Feeding principles it is less likely to suffer from chronic problems associated with old age. If there are problems with such things as mild arthritis, rheumatism and the like, the formulation of Green Dog makes it suitable for the inclusion of Natural Medicines such and herbs and homoeopathic products. Please call the help-line if you would like further information on this

8. Frequently asked questions

Should I give supplements?

Not as a rule - Green Pantry contains all the nutrients required for all adult dogs in good health. It is also makes an ideal primary part of a Holistic Diet for puppies and older dogs. Please contact us for more information or advice. We suggest that table scraps are given occasionally which, provided they are no more than about 20 per cent of the total diet, will not unbalance the formulation. Dogs love this; it provides variety and also increases the bond between pet and owner. Things containing milk products, pork or sugar should not be given.

Should I give bones?

Some professionals do not recommend the feeding of bones because in some circumstances they can cause gut problems. However, if the rules are followed the benefits of giving bones far outweigh the risks. All dogs love bones especially large knucklebones, which they will gnaw on for hours. They provide calcium in the best form, keep teeth clean and are good for the digestive tract. The rules are: 1) No cooked bones because they have a tendency to splinter and can also more easily compact in the digestive tract, they are also nutritionally inferior, 2) If you have more than one dog, make sure that they do not fight over bones as this can cause them to be eaten too quickly. 3) Make sure the dog does not eat too much at one sitting - little and often is the rule; you should be able take the bone (or food) from the dog without him becoming aggressive - if this is not possible consult a behaviourist, your vet will be able to recommend one

How much should I feed?

This is a very difficult question to answer exactly because so much depends on the age and type of the dog and the exercise being taken. The feeding guide on the bag is a good starting point. Generally, if you are changing from another complete food, use about the same amount. The best way is to feed by eye, and change the amount accordingly, if the dog is too fat, reduce the amount by about one third for a week or two until the effects are seen and be guided by that; if the dog is too thin, increase by the same amount. Make any changes slowly. As a general rule, most dogs are overfed – it is best to be a bit ‘ribby’ – many problems can be caused by overweight especially as the dog gets on in years.

Why do dogs eat grass?

There are several theories including 1. They are short of micronutrients. 2. They are trying to vomit. 3. They may need worming. There is little hard evidence to support any of these theories. For whatever reason, feeding a Holistic Diet will usually reduce this habit.

My dog has an irritated skin, how long will it take to clear up?

This will depend on the cause. Often poor quality diets are associated with this problem because some of the ingredients are irritants. If the problem is associated with diet and also long standing, it may take some weeks to clear completely after you have changed to Holistic Feeding. What usually happens is that the problem improves slowly as the body returns to normal functioning.

Why does my dog rub its bottom along the floor?

This can be a sign of either worms or, more commonly, irritated anal sacs. The anal sacs contain, amongst other things, toxins from the body which should be voided naturally as the dog passes faeces. The anal sacs often become blocked and irritated because they are overloaded with toxins caused by a faulty diet. Reducing the amount of toxins by feeding correct food will help prevent the problem.

Is hyperactivity associated with diet

Yes. The majority of dog foods, even some so-called holistic diets, contain synthetic chemical compounds (E. numbers) of some kind, even though this may not be obvious, and hyperactivity is usually associated with the ingestion of these substances. Hyperactive dogs fed on an Holistic diet usually revert to normal in a short time.

Should dogs be given milk?

No. The only milk a dog should receive is from its mother before weaning. Dogs, like humans, can digest milk from other species, but not very well. If the dog is receiving a good diet from other sources there is no need. So if there is a choice don't give it to them.

My dog eats his own stools and that of other dogs – will your food help?

It may well do. The cause of this problem is usually either lack of essential micronutrients in the diet or artificial flavours to make the dog eat it in the first place. The use of our food will eliminate these two issues.

My dog is doing well on his existing diet so why change?

Look carefully at the raw materials used in the food. If it contains too many of the wrong sort of ingredients and not enough of the right sort, you may not see a problem now, but this may have implications for health later on. Many veterinarians are linking long term use of some raw materials in modern diets to common diseases.

Is it harmful to add things to the diet?

Whilst the food contains everything a dog needs, like us they do enjoy variety and we recommend that table scraps be given occasionally. Provided this is no more than about 20% percent of the total food, additions will not unbalance the diet provided they do not contain large amounts of milk products, artificial additives, sugar, spicy or salty foods. Dogs will eat green vegetables which should be given, if available, partly cooked

What are the main differences between your food and other premium brands?

- **Free of artificial 'E' numbers.** The first complete food on the market to contain absolutely no artificial 'E numbers'. Other brands may not contain things like artificial colours and preservatives etc. but they usually contain synthetic vitamins which can be toxic.
- **Range of carbohydrates** It contains a range of carbohydrates excluding those which are associated with digestive problems. Other brands commonly contain the wrong combination and amounts of grain cereals.
- **Range of vegetables** It contains a range of vegetable herbage once available to the dog's prey. These contain vital micronutrients which are often missing from other brands.
- **Designed to be fed with up to 20% table scraps.** This would probably render most other complete premium foods nutritionally unbalanced.
- **Helps control parasites.** A combination of appropriate raw materials to support the immune system and specific herbage helps natural control of parasites as part of an holistic lifestyle.