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Five Foods You Should Feed Your Dog

by Dogs Naturally Magazine in General Nutrition, Nutrition And Diet

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Do you feed your dog raw food? Kibble? Cooked or dehydrated food? A mixture of more than one? Regardless of what you feed, it's always a good idea to take a step back every now and again and

decide whether your dog could use a little nutrition boost. Sound nutrition is the first step in providing a healthier lifestyle for your dog, so let food by thy medicine! Here are five healthy food items you might want to add to your dog's diet.

Green Tripe

Green tripe is truly a superfood that no dog should be without! Tripe is loaded with naturally occurring digestive enzymes and probiotics. Think how much money you can spend on supplements when those same wonderful, natural substances are in abundance in green tripe. Tripe is also loaded with B vitamins and has the perfect ratio of calcium to phosphorus – 1:1. It also contains the essential fatty acids Linoleic and Linolenic, in their recommended proportions. If you can't find green tripe from your raw supplier, there are canned products available. Tripe stinks but you won't regret feeding it: no guts, no glory!

Milk Thistle

Although milk thistle is technically a herb not a food, it's an important part of any dog's diet. The active ingredient of milk thistle seed extract is a flavonoid compound called silymarin. This little powerhouse has been shown to be safe and effective in treating a variety of liver diseases and other conditions. It specifically protects the liver against toxins and stimulates the growth of new liver cells to replace those that are dead or damaged.

Milk thistle is a great herb to have on hand and should be given any time your dog is exposed to any toxins including drugs, vaccines, dewormers, lawn chemicals and the like. Milk thistle also has strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions. It can be purchased in powder, capsule, and liquid extract form. Follow label instructions or give a teaspoon of fresh ground milk thistle seed per 20 pounds.

Raw Eggs

Next to green tripe, raw eggs are another one of nature's most wholesome foods for dogs. Eggs are not only economical, but they're one of the most complete and nutritious foods available.

Eggs are a nearly complete source of amino acids (the building blocks of proteins), and contain lots of vitamin A, riboflavin, folate, vitamin B12, iron, selenium and fatty acids. Feed the egg with the shell on, and the phosphorus and calcium are perfectly balanced, making the egg a nearly complete source of nutrition for your dog. Whenever possible, try to find eggs from pasture raised chickens raised without hormones or antibiotics.

Coconut Oil

This superfood is comprised mainly of medium chain triglycerides which in turn are loaded with lauric acid, followed by capric acid, caprylic acid, myristic acid and palmitic. Most of the coconut oil benefits

come from the MCTs. For example, the lauric acid in coconut oil has antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-fungal properties. Capric and caprylic acid have similar properties and are best known for their anti-fungal effects. In addition, MCTs are efficiently metabolized to provide an immediate source of fuel and energy, enhancing athletic performance and aiding weight loss.

In dogs, the MCTs in coconut oil balance the thyroid, helping overweight dogs lose weight and helping sedentary dogs feel energetic. According to Dr. Bruce Fife, certified nutritionist and naturopathic doctor, coconut oil gently elevates the metabolism, provides a higher level of energy and vitality, protects you from illness, and speeds healing. As a bonus, coconut oil improves any dog's skin and coat, improves digestion, and reduces allergic reactions. Look for organic sources whenever possible.

Organ Meats

Organ meats are important for both raw feeders and those who feed kibble. The raw or home prepared diet would be incomplete without the powerful nutritional punch of organ meat and, due to consumer demand for higher quality protein sources, most high end kibbles avoid the use of byproducts and this includes organ meats.

Compared to regular cuts of muscle meat, organ meats are more densely packed with just about every nutrient including heavy doses of B vitamins such as: B1, B2, B6, folic acid and vitamin B12. Organ meats are also loaded with minerals like phosphorus, iron, copper, magnesium and iodine, and provide the important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. It's important to note that animals raised outside on grass contain even higher levels of these essential nutrients than their grain fed counterparts.

Raw is best but you can also fry up some liver or kidney for your dog as a treat.

It doesn't take a lot of effort or money to add these superfoods to your dog's diet. Try them on your dog and watch him reap the rewards!

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