

Preventative Nutrition: A New Way To Look At Feeding Your Dog



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When I went to veterinary school thirteen years ago, part of our curriculum focused on what was at the time, a relatively new concept: medical nutrition; specialized dog and cat foods created for companion animals that had

specific diseases. Some foods were formulated to help reduce the occurrence of kidney/bladder stones, or to help control blood sugar in diabetic dogs, while others were formulated to help dogs with chronically itchy skin. Some dog food companies even went as far as calling their dog foods “prescription” diets available only from licensed veterinarians. The dog food industry embraced the idea of formulating foods specifically balanced to act as an adjunct treatment for animals with different types of diseases. From this concept a new line of canine nutrition has emerged; preventative nutrition.

Preventative nutrition focuses on feeding a higher quality dog food every day in an effort to prevent or reduce the risk of certain diseases. Crystal Creek® is proud to announce that we now handle the Canine Health Forward line of dog food that is built around the idea of preventative nutrition. Canine Health Forward focuses on creating a healthier diet by improving the quality of the dog food. The quality of a dog food is determined by formulation strategies, ingredient selection and the manufacturing process.

Ingredient Quality

The quality and grade of ingredients going into a dog food has a direct impact on the digestibility of that food. Subsequently, the digestibility of the food has a direct impact on the health and performance of the dog. There are multiple grades of protein, fat and vitamins/minerals available

to dog food manufacturers, each one having a different nutrient bioavailability.

Webster’s Dictionary defines nutrient bioavailability as: “the proportion of a nutrient that enters the circulation when introduced into the body, so is able to have an active effect”. In simpler terms, bioavailability is the proportion of what your dog eats that is actually digested, absorbed and utilized by their body.

When a nutrient is highly bioavailable, it can be readily digested and absorbed in a consistent, dependable manner. The goal of the Canine Health Forward line of dog food is to formulate and produce products of the highest bioavailability possible. Because of this philosophy, Canine Health Forward has made the commitment to exclusively use the two highest bioavailable sources of fat and protein in the manufacturing of their dog food. The sourcing of vitamins and minerals also comes from the top tier of bioavailable ingredients.



The Manufacturing Process

Another factor determining the quality of the dog food is the process of cooking the dog food. The Slow Bake method of manufacturing increases the production cost but is imperative to making the most bioavailable dog food possible.

Conventional Baking processes use high temperatures to rapidly cook the dog food, thus shortening the manufacturing time and decreasing the cost of production. This rapid cooking and use of high temperatures can damage nutrients like fats, starches and proteins making them less bioavailable. Have you ever noticed that when feeding a cheaply priced dog food, you need to feed more of it to keep weight on a dog? Cheap dog foods commonly have compromised protein, fat and starch bioavailability; meaning dogs have to eat more of it to get the proper amount of nutrients.

By using the Slow Bake process, the food is baked at a lower temperature, preventing damage to key ingredients such as protein, fat and starch. As starches are baked, they begin to “gelatinize”. Gelatinization is the breakdown of starches in the presence of heat and water. This process creates a starch that is much more digestible. Research shows that the higher the gelatinization percent, the more usable the starch source becomes. Therefore, the Slow Baked process used by Canine Health Forward makes their carbohydrate sources (starches) highly digestible.

Formulation Strategies

Omega-3 and omega-6 levels are commonly discussed, but why are they so important and where do they come from? The best sources of omega-3 fatty acids come from oils derived from ocean-marine fish. Omega-3 fatty acids are important in brain and cardiovascular function while omega-6 fatty acids support skin health and coat quality.

Cheap dog foods will typically have high levels of omega-6 and low levels of omega-3, leading to a high omega 6:3 ratio.

The story of omega-3 and omega-6 is more complex than just the amount to feed or the quality of their sourcing. The omega fatty acids need to be formulated with the appropriate ratios. The topic of omega 6:3 ratios is relatively new to the dog food industry. New research shows that lowering the ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 can have beneficial effects on limiting cardiovascular disease, arthritis and even reduced risks of certain kinds of cancers. Simply put, the lower the ratio of omega 6 to omega 3, the healthier the dog food. Canine Health Forward is proud of the fact that they have one of the lowest omega 6 to omega 3 ratios in the dog food market!

The Canine Health Forward line of dog food is designed from the ground up with the unique focus of creating a dog food based on the core principles of preventative nutrition. Crystal Creek® is excited to carry this line of dog food because the foundational principles of preventative nutrition resonate well with our philosophies on animal feeding. Call Crystal Creek® at 1-888-376-6777 to learn more about this high quality nutrition for your canine companion.

