

Does Your Pet Need A Supplement?



Even though we are supposed to get all the vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids in our normal foods, we sometimes don't eat enough of them to obtain the benefits. So we pop a vitamin and go on our way. But what about our pets? Do they need nutritional supplements? Even if he's eating a good diet, does your pet need a supplement? There are several reasons why he may.

Your pet's health issues can sometimes be addressed with the right supplementation, in addition to veterinary care and guidance on which ones to give. Here are a few of the top supplements that can have a positive impact for your pet.

Ask The Vet First...

Always ask your veterinarian before giving pets any supplement - even though supplements may seem safe, they can react with certain medications. Your veterinarian knows your pet's health history and if they have any conditions that would benefit (or not) from supplementation.



Fish Oil – Essential fatty acids (EFAs) in fish oil can help with inflammation inside and outside the body, including the skin and coat. It can help relieve itchy skin caused by a diet lacking in EFAs, as well as arthritis by reducing inflammation in the joints and relieving pain and stiffness. One study has even suggested that fish oil helps pets with cancer by increasing the survival time as much as 50%.¹



Glucosamine and Chondroitin – Older and arthritic dogs often react positively to supplementation with glucosamine and chondroitin. The supplements help the body repair damaged joint tissue, slow down and possibly stop cartilage loss, and help lubricate and protect the joint tissue.



Digestive Enzymes - Digestive problems such as irritable bowel disease, gas and diarrhea can be relieved with digestive enzymes (molecules found in the digestive tract). The enzymes have also been demonstrated to help with allergies, autoimmune disorders and even cancer, as well as allowing the proper absorption of essential nutrients to assist the digestive system in working efficiently.



Probiotics - These are the good bacteria that reside in your pet's digestive system, and capable of keeping bad bacteria from causing gastrointestinal problems and producing toxins. Probiotics can help pets whose good bacteria is depleted because of stress, and also to combat the results of prescribed antibiotics and residual antibiotics found in food and water.



Multivitamins – While touted as a great preventative for many ailments in humans, multivitamins have little research behind them to justify their use in pets. Even more, they may cause issues in pets with certain health conditions like cancer. The exception may be for pets eating homemade or raw diets that require addition supplementation. Giving pets multivitamins should only be on the advice of your veterinarian.

Fish Oil, Glucosamine, and Multivitamins Photos by Colin Dunn; Probiotics Photo by Ashley Steel; Digestive Enzymes Photo by SuperFantastic

Reference: 1. <http://www.hillsvet.com/HillsVetUS/v1/portal/en/us/content/research/cancer-neoplasia/nrr-lymphoma-renal-lipoic-acid.pdf>

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