

NUTRITION MADE EASY – VEGGIES

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My two little Yorkie dogs have been getting the extracted pulp (mulch) left over from the juicing machine. I had heard it was good for them, but they haven't done well lately. They have gained weight and are lethargic. What could be wrong?

There are many factors contained in vegetables. First, there is a certain variable amount of plant fiber depending on the variety of vegetable involved. Stiffer or denser veggies always have more of the pulp left after juicing. For example, if we compare leafy spinach to carrots or broccoli there is a lot more liquid, and less pulp in the spinach, and more pulp leftover in the carrots/broccoli. Next, most of the nutrients are in the fluid part of a vegetable. These are all the vitamins, the minerals, proteins, sugars, micro trace nutrients, and the various antioxidant phytochemicals. What has probably happened is that the dogs are getting too much pulp, and are missing out on the beneficial parts of the veggies in the juice.

One of the best ways for humans to get all these nutrients in a much smaller volume is to concentrate them by juicing. To get all the nutrition from one 8 ounce glass of juice we and our pets would need to eat a couple of pounds of the whole vegetable. If you are drinking the juice yourself, and giving the pets only the dry pulp then they are only getting minimal nutrient and maximum fiber. This is not entirely negative if there is plenty of nutrition in the remainder of the diet. Pets will rarely drink the juices from veggies, but will readily eat added whole vegetable in their food.

When pets are fed vegetables or fruits they should always be fresh, and organically grown if at all possible. Pets will quickly adapt to, and enjoy the tastes, and benefits of a variety of fresh raw fruits and veggies. If organic is not available soak them for 10-15 minutes in pure water, with an apple cider vinegar added (1-2 tablespoons), to remove the toxic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers). If fresh is not available frozen is acceptable (but less nutritious). Canned fruits and veggies should only be used when nothing else is available. Canned produce has too much sugar and salt, and is really not acceptable in pets. There are too many veggie varieties to go over in a short column, but the dark green, yellow and orange colored solid veggies are the best. Let's use broccoli, sweet potato, and squash as examples. Broccoli is high in calcium, potassium, Vit A, and fiber. It is one of the anticancer fighting veggies. Squashes are very high in nutrients and most pets love them. Grate them fresh, or cook and then mash them. Squashes retain much of the food value after cooking. Sweet potatoes are high in Vit A. They are good for lung ailments and for fighting lung cancer. Process as you would for squash.

All veggies should be grated or chopped finely in a food processor till the pieces are quite tiny, as dog and cat digestive systems can handle them better that way. They should be cooked lightly if they are to be fed as larger pieces. Many give pets chunks of veggies and let them eat them whole. As pets don't chew them well you will find that these parts come thru without a lot of digestion unless they are chopped finely. If your pet suffers

from any inflammatory conditions such as arthritis or allergy, parasites or respiratory ailments, you should avoid the nightshade family of vegetables which include potato, tomato, peppers and eggplant. This family of veggie will aggravate those conditions. One of the best veggies to start with in a finicky cat is asparagus. It is high in the beta carotenes, selenium, and Vit C. It is also low in sodium. Dr. Dougs cat Whitesox loved asparagus so much that he would even steal a spear from the pickled jar. Very strange indeed for a cats tastebuds.

A small dog and cat should get 1-2 teaspoons a day of ground veggies mixed in the food. Medium dogs ¼ to ½ cup, large dogs 1 cup, giant breeds 2 cups a day. The fiber in the pulp is good for bowel health, and to help manage blood levels of fats and cholesterol. A word about fruit. If used at all, feed on an empty stomach as they pass quickly (20-30 minutes) thru the digestive tract. Don't feed anything else for some hours to avoid excess fermentation of sugars and bad gas. La peuwie-stinkum! Remove any pits first, as many are poisonous. Buy organic, or soak them as for veggies in vinegar solution. Berries, apples, and bananas are the best, especially blue berries which are rich in antioxidants. Bananas are soothing to an irritated GI tract and therefore can be useful in diarrhea and inflammatory/irritable bowel disease. Apples are packed with Vit C, and pectin which is a powerful detoxifier cleansing the blood. Pectin also slows the absorption of sugars which can be beneficial in diabetes. It is one of the few fruits that can be mixed with veggies, along with blueberries. Use the skins and all but grate or mash them very well first. Make sure you examine the pets stools to make sure your pet can digest any fruits, or just avoid them altogether.

Next time we will discuss the grains. To feed or not to feed grain.