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Grain Free Dog Food and Heart Disease: What Should I Know?

FDA Investigation

On June 27th, 2019, the FDA posted an update on their ongoing investigation on the correlation between grain free dog foods and canine dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). DCM is a type of canine heart disease (CHD) that affects the heart muscle, many times resulting in congestive heart failure (CHF). Over 90 percent of food reported in DCM cases were eating grain free food, and 93 percent of reported foods contained peas and/or lentils, while 42 percent contained potatoes/sweet potatoes. It is important to note that this study noted a CORRELATION, not a CAUSATION between a grain free diet and DCM.

What Should I Do?

We recommend speaking with your veterinarian to determine which pet food is best for your furry friends. Each pet has unique nutritional needs, and we are happy to discuss with you what foods have natural ingredients, single protein sources, healthy grains, healthy carbohydrate sources (rice/oatmeal), and so on. The ingredients in the food were more important to look at than the actual food brand itself, and the FDA is urging all pet owners to work with their veterinarians to find the proper food for their pet's needs. **We recommend Purina, Hill's Science Diet, and Royal Canin brands.**

Should you need to switch your companion's food, we recommend to do so gradually over the course of two weeks as to prevent any gastrointestinal upset. The following recommendations are noted below:

Day 1: 100% Old Food

Day 2-5: $\frac{3}{4}$ old food and $\frac{1}{4}$ new food

Day 6-9: $\frac{1}{2}$ old food and $\frac{1}{2}$ new food

Day 10-13: $\frac{1}{4}$ old food and $\frac{3}{4}$ new food

Day 14: 100% New food

If you would like to read more about grain free dog foods and heart disease, feel free to check out the associated links below:

<https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/news-events/fda-investigation-potential-link-between-certain-diets-and-canine-dilated-cardiomyopathy>

<https://drjeandoddspethealthresource.tumblr.com/post/176405475391/fda-dog-heartdisease#.XRvk5utKiUk>