

# Humans and Dogs with Cancer and their Foods

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## Abstract

One in three people gets cancer. One in four dogs get cancer. In western countries where dogs are treated very well, dogs are fed processed foods mostly. These processed foods are the prime suspects for one of the causes for cancer in dogs. In particular, it is the red meats used and the preservatives contained in the dog foods which are probably the sources of carcinogenicity. Healthy dog foods include all foods healthy for human beings with many exceptions, like bone-in fish, chocolates, coffee, avocados. There is a long list of human foods which cannot be fed to dogs. Veterinary physicians should regularly check the mouths of dog, for early detection of mouth cancer. Like for humans, early detection of cancer leads to better recovery from the disease with proper therapy.

**Keywords:** Carnivore; Dry Foods; Wet Foods; Carcinogenicity; Bones

## Background

One in four dogs will have cancer, and one in two of them who live to 10 years, die from the disease [1]. This compares to one in three people will have cancer during their lifetimes [2]. In late October 2015, the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) proclaimed that processed foods and red meat consumption could cause cancer [3-13]. The ingredient list for a commercial adult dog food is as follows [14]:

## Ingredients

Lamb, turkey meal, chicken meal, sweet potatoes, chickpeas, peas, chicken fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols), menhaden fish meal, potatoes, sun-dried alfalfa, natural flavor, minerals (iron proteinate, zinc proteinate, copper proteinate, ferrous sulfate, zinc sulfate, copper sulfate, potassium iodide, manganese proteinate, manganous oxide, manganese sulfate, sodium selenite), vitamins (vitamin E supplement, thiamine mononitrate, ascorbic acid, vitamin A supplement, biotin, niacin, calcium pantothenate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, vitamin B12 supplement, riboflavin, vitamin D3 supplement, folic acid), choline chloride, mixed tocopherols (a preservative), dried enterococcus faecium fermentation product, dried lactobacillus acidophilus fermentation product, dried lactobacillus casei fermentation product, dried lactobacillus plantarum fermentation product, dried trichoderma reesei fermentation extract

## Guaranteed Analysis

Crude Protein (min.) 32.00%, Crude Fat (min.) 18.00%, Crude Fiber (max.) 4.00%, Moisture (max.) 10.00%, Linoleic Acid (Omega 6) (min.) 3.70%, Vitamin."

It can be seen from the quote obtained from [14] that there were many preservatives used in the adult dog food. Like preservatives in human food, these preservatives should be viewed as carcinogens. In addition, the processed red meat could also contribute to the food's potential to cause cancer in dogs. After all, the World Health Organization (WHO) had decreed that all processed foods and red meats were probably carcinogenic to humans in October 2015 [3]. Another dog food sold has an ingredient list as follows [15]:

## "Ingredients

Chicken, Corn Meal, Ground Whole Grain Sorghum, Chicken By-Product Meal (Natural source of Chondroitin Sulfate and Glucosamine), Ground Whole Grain Barley, Dried Beet Pulp, Chicken Flavor, Chicken Fat (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of Vitamin E), Dried Egg Product, Potassium Chloride, Fish Oil (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of Vitamin E), Salt, Sodium Hexametaphosphate, Flax Meal, Fructooligosaccharides, Calcium Carbonate, Choline Chloride, Minerals (Ferrous Sulfate, Zinc Oxide, Manganese Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Manganous Oxide, Potassium Iodide, Cobalt Carbonate), DL-Methionine, Vitamins (Ascorbic Acid, Vitamin A Acetate, Calcium Pantothenate, Biotin, Thiamine Mononitrate (source of vitamin B1), Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacin, Riboflavin Supplement (source of vitamin B2), Inositol, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride (source of vitamin B6), Vitamin D3 Supplement, Folic Acid), Vitamin E Supplement, Brewers Dried Yeast, Beta-Carotene, Rosemary Extract."

It is obvious that this particular dog food has many preservatives. It is the perspective of the current work that these preservatives are contributing to the cancer cases of dogs that eat this food.

## Healthy Dog Foods and Other Good Practices

Like for humans, fresh foods suitable for dogs should be considered healthy for them. Clean, raw or cooked red meats and white meats should be fine. In many developing countries, the pets live off the table leftovers of the family. These scraps are acceptable. They can even be healthy if there is not too much salt or sugar in the scraps.

In general, dogs do get choked on chicken and fish bones. So, these bones are not suitable. Bones of cow, lamb, goat, pig, deer are suitable for dogs to chew on if they are clean, and perhaps cooked to kill the microbes. Chocolates, caffeine and coffee are not suitable for dogs [16].

Like for human beings, if the ingredient list of the processed food (including canned foods) is as long as an essay (like the two example excerpts above from [14] and [15]) with difficult scientific names, do not buy the processed food. Certainly, do not consume any part of it.

It is recommended that the veterinary physician examines the teeth of your dog periodically. This helps to identify early signs of mouth cancer. Dogs tend to get mouth cancer more than humans because of their natural behavior. As in human beings, early detection of cancer (any kind) leads to better chances of recovery from the disease.

Other foods unsuitable for dogs [16] include avocado, citrus, coconut and coconut oil, milk and dairy products, grapes and raisins, macadamia nuts, nuts in general, onions, garlic, chives, yeast dough, xylitol (a sweetener used in human foods like gum, etc.), assorted baked goods.

## Discussion and Conclusion

About a third of all human beings will get cancer in their lifetimes, and about a quarter of all dogs will get cancer also. As 'dogs are a man's best friend', it is logical to deduce that many of the factors which cause cancer in man, also will cause the same disease in their dogs. In urban areas in many countries, dogs are kept for security from burglars (when the human person is out of the home) and as a friendly pet. Dogs do help their owners de-stress. Many dogs even reflect their owner's state of stress. It is conceivable that the level of stress in dogs will affect their ability to withstand disease onslaught, as it would in humans. The objective of the current work is to focus on the foods consumed by dogs. It is clear that most of the processed foods contain preservatives, and red meats preferred by dogs. Both of these factors could contribute greatly to the high statistics of cancer cases in dogs. It is the recommendation of the current work to revert to feeding your dog with fresh foods, especially fresh red meats which is clean and free of hormones and

toxins. It is also recommended to bring your dog to the veterinary physician for regular health check-ups, including detecting early signs of cancer. Some dog cancers do show up as lumps within the skin of the dog, like skin cancer in humans. As with humans, early detection of cancer in dogs raises the probability of survival from the disease.

## Acknowledgment

This paper is dedicated to all the people and dogs with cancer in the world.

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