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# *Fish – know your fish.*

**Fish** - as part of your dog's diet can offer many health benefits as a rich source of protein, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids.

Consuming fish on a regular basis can contribute to optimal brain health, digestive health, heart health, joint health and more.

Regular consumption of fish can help prevent arthritis, cancer, dementia, renal problems, and many other inflammatory diseases.

The essential EPH & DHA omega 3 fatty acids in fish do play a significant role in the maintenance of good psychological health, and can help speed healing.

There are many commercial dog foods and treats that contain fish – **but not all** of the fish used in these products is truly health supporting.

**Note!** … Because today environmental toxicity is a huge worldwide issue and both the skin and fat of fish do collect pollution toxins that accumulate in the waters of rivers, dams, streams and our oceans – therefore it is suggested removing the skin first.

**Note! …** The fish skin and fat became a cheap by-product from the fish industries and get incorporated in commercial animal feeds, treats and supplements, then "touted" for providing your dog with health skin and a shiny coat.

Don't allow your decision on what fish-included product to purchase to be influenced by persuasive advertising tactics, pet store staff advice, a breeder's advice, your veterinarian's advice, price-point or popularity.

Be advised that at worst, your dog's health can and will be adversely impacted.
It is always best to make your decision *from a place of informed knowledge.*

Tilapia, bass, eel and trout - contains lower levels of essential Omega 3 fatty acids.

*Dr. Richard Pitcairn* - It has been found that a fish living and swimming in your typical contaminated stream or other water containing PCB's (a very common contaminant) and those fish will then concentrate **these toxins in their tissues** – 10,000 times the amount that is in the contaminated water.

*Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* - is warning people to remove and discard the skin, fat and internal organs of fish before cooking, to help reduce the toxins that may be ingested. (http://ow.ly/L8vFC).

{Remember when you buy fish at the market, it normally comes scaled and gutted for a reason}.

*Environmental Working Group* - “When pets were tested in 2008, dogs and cats tested positive for 48 out of 70 industrial chemicals.”

*Charles Santerre* - specializing in chemical contaminants in food – "It takes six years to rid the body of PCBs and one year for mercury,"

Fish became a very popular ingredient in commercial pet foods, dry foods, canned foods, and raw foods.
If you are feeding your dog food that “contains fish”, or “fish by products such as fish meal or fish oil”, or fish from a day’s fishing anywhere it is recommend that you take a few minutes to review the source, type and toxin levels of fish in your dog’s food or what you offer the dog.

The same holds true if you are giving your dog homemade food that includes fish.
*Conversely, poor-source fish, and fish-based products can contribute to the acquisition of ailments and serious diseases.*

**Best looking at deep, cold, open sea water produce.**
**Fact** - deep-sea, cold, open waters are less contaminated than other bodies of water.
Fish that live in these cold deep waters have a high and amazing health benefits offered by the high-levels of omega-3 fatty acids and protein source.

**To know - the species of fish matters.**

The species of fish that offer the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids are: Krill salmon, sardines, pilchards, herring, mackerel, snapper fish, swordfish and tuna.

Feeding fish as alterative protein for allergies to red meat & poultry. Then you have to consider using several types of fish to get the best nutritional profile possible – i.e. look for a combination that yields the highest level of protein plus the highest level of omega-3 EPH & DHA fatty acids.

**Looking at mercury contamination – it is not just a scare.**
It is important to select fish that is relatively low in mercury contamination.
Cold water wild or wild-caught fatty fish, not currently endangered from over-fishing and lowest in mercury are: Krill, sardines, pilchards, Arctic char, crawfish, herring, Pacific flounder, Pacific sole, tilapia (low in Omega 3, high in omega 6), wild Alaskan Salmon, wild Pacific salmon.
The highest mercury contamination for wild and wild caught fish occurs in: Atlantic halibut, golden snapper, king mackerel, marlin, pike, sea bass, shark, swordfish, and tuna (albacore).

**Note!** >> Fish from the high-mercury contaminated category should not be offered more than one time per week.
Note! Pregnant and lactating dogs and puppies should not be fed any high mercury contaminated fish.

Looking at persistent organic pollutants (POPs) with fish as part of the diet.
POPs are pollutants **that exist** in the environment which bio-accumulate in fish, and by eating these contaminated fish is then also accumulate in the body of humans and animals.
POPs are toxic substances that pose extreme health hazards to humans, animals and the environment.

*PCB's and DDT* are two examples of POPs.
You can read more about POPs here.

**Whole fish (whole food principals in feeding the carnivore domesticated dog.**

Whole fish and related products (species appropriate for dogs), from clean cold open waters offers the best quality, low-contaminant nutrition and are therefore preferable to farm-raised whole fish and related fish meal products (both of which contain toxic contaminants).

**Looking at farm raised fish.**

Many dog food products contain fish, and fish derivatives (i.e. fish meal or fish oil) sourced from farm raised fish.
Consumption of farm-raised fish might and do increases your dog's toxic load, and while this *may* not result in short-term health issues, it can result in multiple long-term health issues including a long-list of inflammatory diseases.
Therefore it is recommended that you take a few minutes to read about the multiple inflammatory agents that your dog may consume when eating a product that contains farm raised fish and some contaminated ocean species.

**Looking at "fish meal" products.**

Fish meal was at one time exclusively a by-product of the fishing industry, and up until the early 1900's was used mainly as a fertilizer for farmer's fields.

Today, there are three basic categories of fish meal –
Fish meal made from fish caught specifically to make fish meal
Fish meal made from the by-catches of another fishery
Fish meal made from the leftovers (undesirable offcuts and offal)
Fish made-for human consumption fish products.

Fish meal is used by both the pet food industry and animal feed industry.

Fish meal can offer concentrated protein, but it can also be a dangerous source of toxins.

Fish meal is also used to feed farm raised fish, and in the preparation of certain antibiotics.

The quality of a fish meal depends on many factors such as the source of the fish (i.e. is the fish meal made from farm-raised fish or from cold, clean water wild or wild caught fish, or from wild or wild-caught fish in contaminated waters).

The fish used in the making of fish meal tend to go rancid quickly - in order to prevent rancidity from occurring some producers of fish meal use toxic and inflammatory chemical preservatives such as ethoxyquin, sodium nitrite and sodium nitrite with formaldehyde.

If you are feeding your dog a product that contains fish meal do your research and make sure that the fish meal used is **ethoxyquin**-free.
Read more about - ethoxyquin here.

High heat cooking of meat-protein (including fish) creates a chemical reaction in which carcinogens are formed.

Most fish meal is made by cooking, pressing, drying and grinding the fish.
This means that most fish meal is **highly processed** at the fish meal plant even before it gets to the pet food manufacturing plant where it may be cooked again at least once if not a third time during the dry food or wet food manufacturing process.
For **this reason**, fish meal is **not** a substance that you should be pleased to see in any pet food.

**Low in Omega 3 and high in contaminants – be aware.**
A few examples, used by the pet food industry because they are readily available and inexpensive...

Basa (also known as catfish or pangasius).
Catfish is typically farm raised.
Talapia is typically farm raised.

These are low in Omega 3 fatty acids.
Typically fed soy and corn pellets sourced from GMO corn and soy.
GMO corn and GMO soy is high in herbicide residue;
GMO corn has been proven to cause the growth of tumors – making farm raised tilapia an even more undesirable fish.

**The bottom line** - fish can be very good for your dog, but not if the fish is contaminated with multiple toxins!

**For your information.**
For example: the use of trendy words on packaging and in promotional videos, commercials
(i.e. 'omega-fatty acids included',
'supports coat and skin health',
'hypo allergenic dog food rich in omega 3',
'all natural', 'holistic', etc.);
packaging has attractive photos (i.e. a healthy, happy dog, fresh, appetizing looking food ingredients), etc.
All of these things are marketing gimmicks designed to leave plenty of room for 'interpretation' by you the consumer and by the product manufacturer.
If you assume you do not look at the obvious and underlying details.
The pet food industry takes great advantage of the consumer's gap in knowledge to assure large profit often at the expense of your dog's health.

**Know this!** ... The majority of pet food store employees get their diet and nutrition 'training' in-house salesmen on the job or from the same pet food manufacturers, whose product is for sale in their place of employment – the pet food store.

The opinion you are getting **from the staff person** is typically not based on objective thought or fact.

The typical veterinarian spends **one week only in a four year veterinary sciences course studying food and nutrition for pets –**

Then to further understand **this** dilemma.... **know** that dogs is but part of that one week "animals" nutrition study.
In that one week of study on food and nutrition, typically 80% to 100% of the course material and media is supplied by **the big pet food manufacturers – see that study book and you will find a pet food company's name on it.**

In addition, during the 4 year course the same pet food manufacturers provide 'for free', pet products to the students for their own personal pets.
After graduating from the veterinary sciences course, the student are to open their own veterinary practice, or become a partner at an already establish veterinarian hospital, **where the same manufacturer's pet food will be sold** – both parties (veterinarian and manufacturer) making a tidy profit from sales.
The same is true for most veterinarian hospital in-house animal nutritionists.
Unfortunately in the majority of cases, this situation is not one that fosters broad-perspective knowledge-based objectivity regarding diet, food and nutrition.

As we know the average pet owner buys the cheapest dog food they can because it is not their top priority – come on!

The cost of a product is not an indication of the actual appropriateness and quality of a product and its ingredients.

While it is true that very inexpensive products are often poor quality, many high-priced products contain listed and hidden problematic ingredients as well.

Inflammatory diseases – for example: arthritis, asthma and other allergic symptoms, autoimmune diseases, colitis, chrohn's disease, dementia, inflammatory bowel disease and other gastro intestinal diseases, thyroid problems and multiple types of cancer.

**Raw fish became as an alternative in feeding dogs.**
*Fish are a natural species appropriate part of the dog as carnivore's diet.*
*Fish – fresh raw, tinned or cooked with lowest levels of contaminants in small quantities, daily i****s absolutely beneficial.***

The concept of fish as nutrition and the rich nutrition containing the absolutely essential Omega 3 EPH & DHA oils as part of your domesticated dog's diet is not new – it also severed a purpose to reduce the incidence of allergies and many food-related problems.

**The concept of "Whole food" relating to fish.**
Fish are an excellent "whole food" and as such appropriate as part of feeding dogs raw.
Preferable the whole fish with scales, fins and the guts still intact - but also cuts if preferred - heads and tinned sections – even minced fish.
This then provides the dog with the ever so important "whole" food requirements.
At times dogs prefer an "aged" fish, so will bury it for 2-4 days before going back to it and eating it.

**What about possible bacteria in fish.**
Any harmful bacteria in raw fish can successfully be nullified by freezing for 24 hours prior to feeding.
*{See article on this website about bacteria and parasites in fish}*

**For your dog as first timers.**
Realize, for many dogs that have not experienced fish, the whole experience can be a bit overwhelming.

**What about fish bones.**
Some dog feeders worry about fish bones.

As long as the fish is fed **raw** and preferably in its entire form, bones should not be an issue.

**Fish with bones for puppies.**
Introduce fish to puppies from 6 – 8 weeks of age.
Some feeders also minced the fish into pulp then still feed the whole fish over a few days – some first cook and then mash the fish.
They puppies learn from an early age to appreciate this food type.

**Canned / tinned fish as alternative.**
Nothing compares with raw whole fish, especially if it is fresh.
But tinned Sardines, Pilchards, Tuna, salmon etc. - in water or oil as alternative.
Tinned fish easy available and a no fuss meal or as supplement as part of the meal.
Supplement whatever you feed with tinned fish 2 or 3 times a week.

**Alternatively to fresh fish or tinned fish – <u>fish / krill oil as supplement</u>.**
*That's the way to go for many concerned feeders.*
*Then also know your product.*
It became <u>essential</u> to feed deep sea cold presses fish and krill oils containing the most important essential Omega 3 oils EPA and DHA as daily supplement to any food you give your dog.