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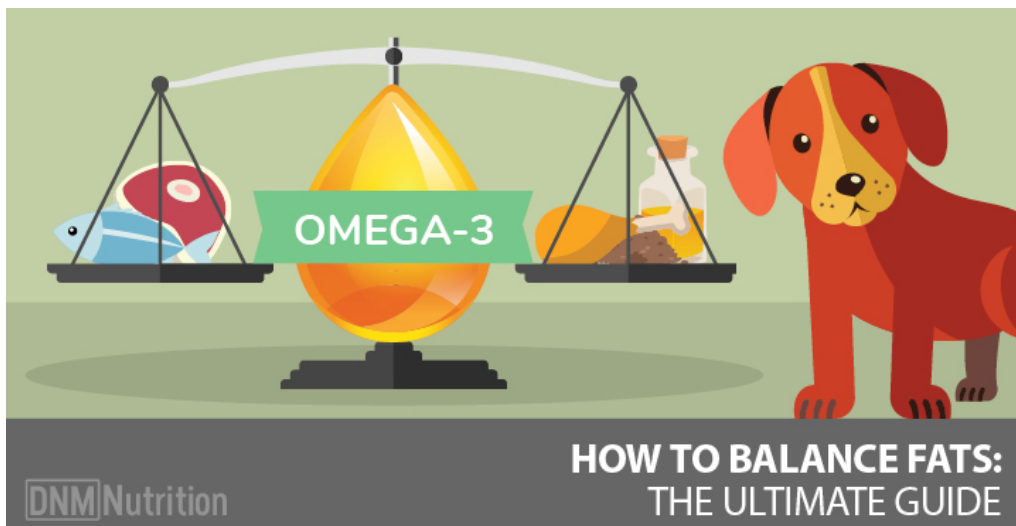
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The ultimate guide for omega 3's.

By: [Dana Scott](#)



Fats are the second most important part of your dog's diet, next to protein.

In the wild, nearly half the calories wild dogs eat are from fat.

But given the importance of fat in the diet, it's surprising how so many of us make the same mistake.

And this mistake can create dangerous inflammation in your dog.

So let's take a look at **omega-3 fats for dogs**, and the **other fats you need to balance** ... and see how critical this delicate balance is to your dog's health.

Why your dog needs fats.

There are just three sources of energy or calories for your dog: **protein, fat and carbohydrate.**

Protein provides calories and also the building blocks for virtually every structure in your dog's body.

They build muscles and soft tissue, skin, hair and nails, blood cells, neurotransmitters and the enzymes that control virtually every action in the body.

Fat also provides energy — and it does much more than just store fat for energy.

Fats (or lipids) function as chemical messengers, they form the membranes of all the body's cells, they help the body absorb fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K), and they control hormones and play a huge role in inflammation.

Carbohydrates provide energy only — they play no other role in the body.

So getting proteins and fats right is critical to your dog's health — they're the building blocks for good nutrition.

And getting the fats right means not just the amount of fat, but the balance.

So saturated fats are solid at room temperature (like butter or lard) and polyunsaturated fats are usually liquid at room temperature.

Your dog needs both saturated and unsaturated fats.

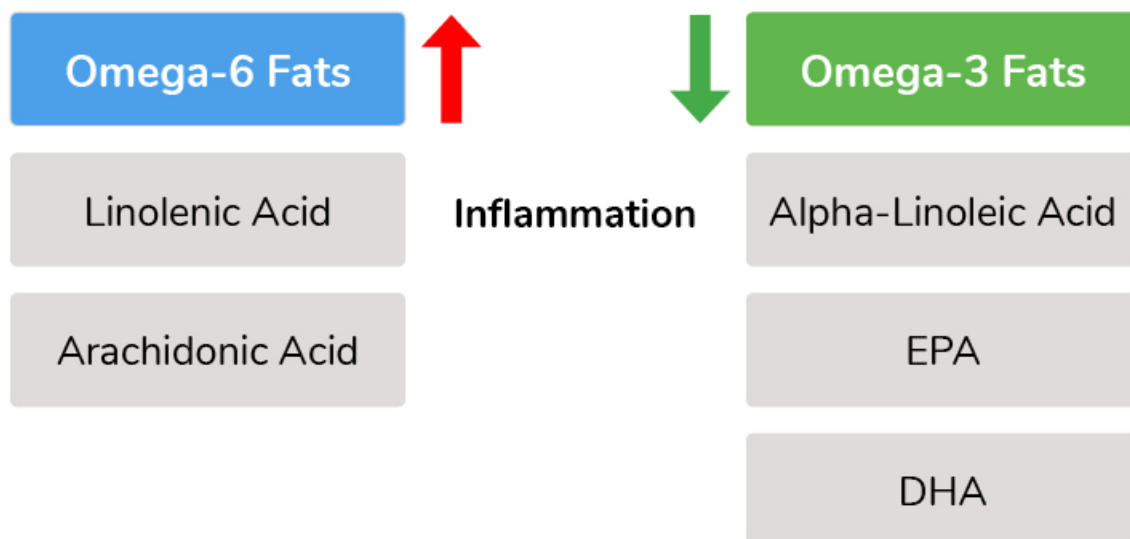
But things tend to go wrong with the polyunsaturated fats and this creates health issues.

Let's take a closer look at Polyunsaturated Fats (PUFAs).

The PUFAs can be divided into two main types: omega-6 and omega-3.

Omega-6 fats **include linoleic acid and arachidonic acid.**

Omega-3 fats include **alpha-linolenic acid, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).**



Both omega-6 and omega-3 fats have the ability to control hormones — and the hormones they control have very different jobs.

The omega-6 fatty acids produce hormones that increase inflammation, which is an important part of the immune response. They also help with blood clotting and cell growth.

The hormones produced by omega-3 fatty acids also **control the immune system** and they work alongside the omega-6 fats in an antagonistic manner.

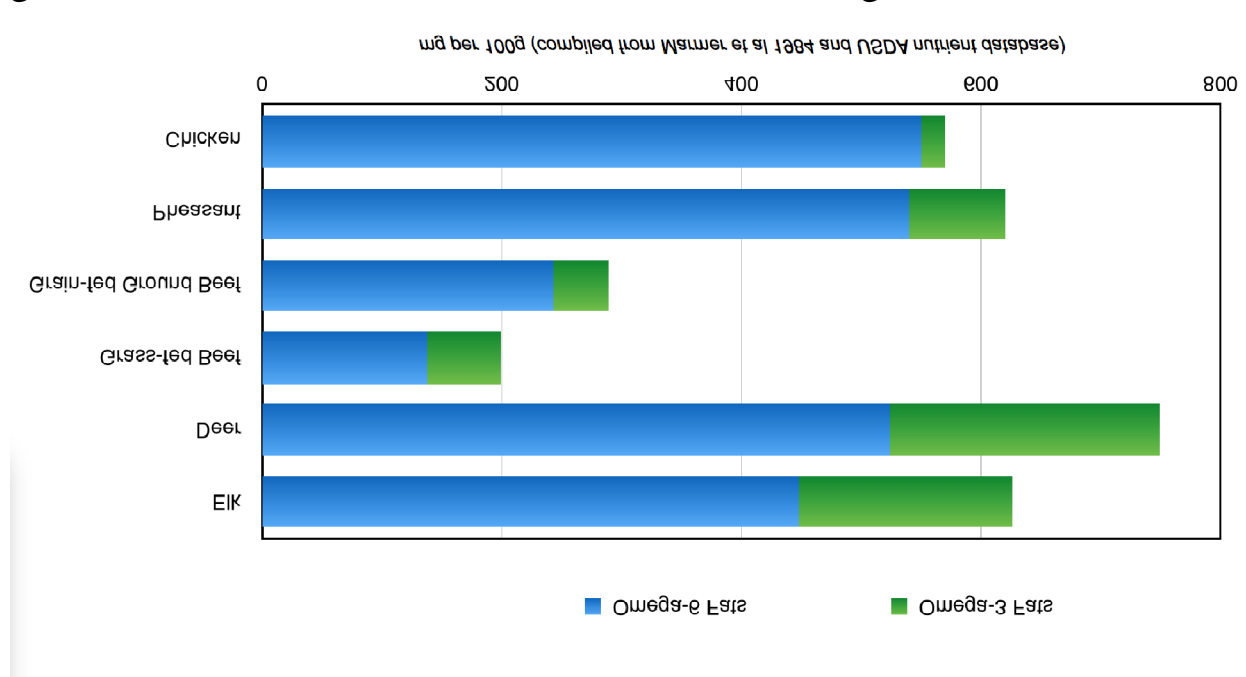
So, balance between these fatty acids **is an important part of a healthy immune system.**

Both fats are important and your **dog needs both in their diet.**

But these fats must be reasonably balanced for a balanced immune system ... and today's modern diets make this balance difficult.

Now let's compare wild animals to the farmed animals we feed our dogs.

Compared to animals in the wild, beef contains much lower amounts of both omega-6 and omega-3. And the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fats in grain-fed beef at 7:1 is double the level in the wild game.



And if we look at **chicken**, we can see that chicken is much higher in omega 6 than the animals in the wild and beef, but contains less omega-3.

Chicken contains much less omega-3 fat than pheasant.

In fact, the **6:3** ratio in chicken is a whopping **28:1**.

Here's why this is a problem ...

Omega-3 fats and inflammation.

Remember, omega-6 and omega-3 fats work together in your dog to control inflammation.

Omega-6 fats raise inflammation while omega-3 fats lower it.

If there's too much omega-6, the hormones that raise inflammation **will be turned on** and if there's too much omega-3, **there will be immune dysfunction.**

Not all inflammation in the body is a bad thing.

If your dog is exposed to viruses or bacteria, inflammation brings white blood cells to the joint as an important part of the immune process.

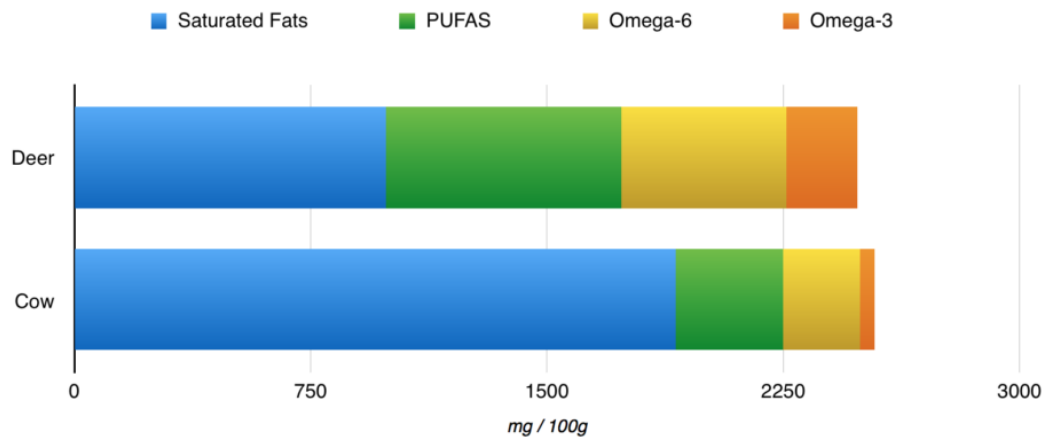
But chronic inflammation – the kind of inflammation that stays for weeks, months and even years – is the cause of most [degenerative and inflammatory health issues](#) in your dog, including allergies, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, heart disease, diabetes, liver or kidney disease and cancer.

So the omega fats must be balanced or your dog's immune system won't be balanced.

So let's take a close look at that balance and we'll start by comparing wild animals and beef.

I chose lean ground beef and you can see that the beef only contains a bit fatter overall than the deer meat.

But the composition of that fat is very different in the wild deer compared to the domestic cow.

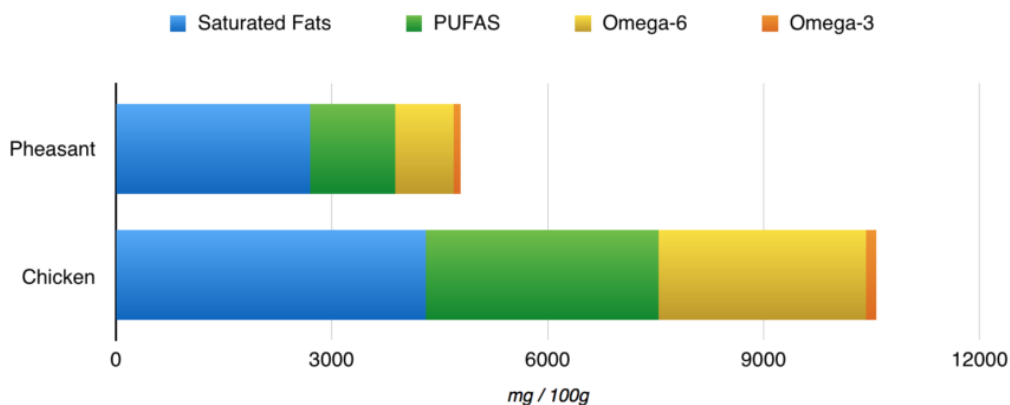


You can see the beef contains double the amount of saturated fat and about half the amount of PUFAs.

And if we look at the PUFAs, we can see that the beef contains much less omega-6 than the deer and a higher ratio of omega-6 to omega-3.

And when the 6:3 ratio is unbalanced, it can cause chronic inflammation.

Now let's compare wild and domestic poultry:



Compared to the pheasant, the domestic chicken contains much more fat overall and it contains a much higher percentage of PUFAs.

And if you compare the amount of omega-6 to omega-3, there's four times more omega-6!

So once again, your dog will be eating food that's **too high in omega-6 fats**.

This will create chronic inflammation and, sooner or later, it will cause the chronic health issues that go with it.

So why do food animals contain this harmful combination of fats?

There are definitely differences between the animals we eat today and the animals our ancestors ate centuries ago.

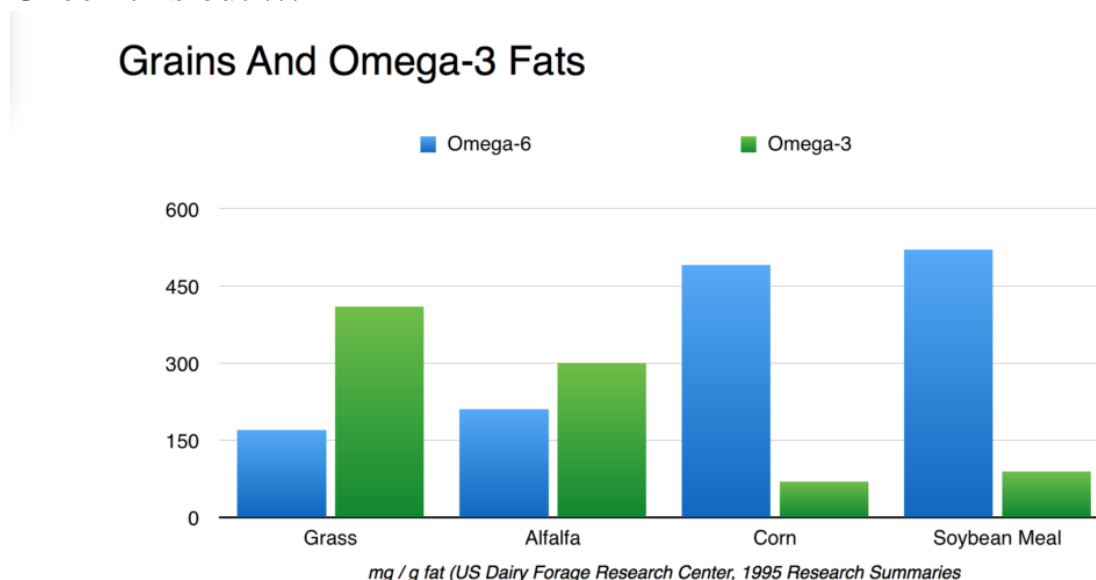
But by a landslide, the biggest difference is the foods we feed them.

In the wild, ruminants would eat grasses (ruminants are animals with a rumen, like cattle, deer, goats and sheep).

But most ruminants today, even grass-fed ones, spend their last days eating grain, soy and corn. ‘

They would eat very little of this in the wild, but they're fed huge amounts before they're slaughtered, to make their meat fattier and tastier (at least to humans).

Check this out ...



This is a comparison of the omega-6 and omega-3 levels in grasses and grains.

You can see that grass and alfalfa contain more omega-3 than omega-6 ... but the corn and soy our food animals eat contains much more inflammatory omega-6 fats and only a fraction of the omega-3 fats.

When cows, chickens, pigs and other domesticated food animals are forced to eat these foods, it changes their fats.

Then know this! >> And ultimately, it will change the fats in your dog when he eats them.

Those deficiencies are passed right up through the food chain.

And this is especially ironic if you're feeding a raw diet ... **because your dog will suffer the same health issues from eating grain-fed animals as the dog would if they ate the grains themselves!**

Now if you're getting a little depressed about this, don't!

In this article you will come to understand how you can fix the fats in your dog's food.

First looking again at dogs eating commercial food diet.

Looking at fats in heat processed diets.

The [Association of American Feed Control Officials](#) (AAFCO) provides nutritional standards (called model bills and regulations) that dog food manufacturers must abide by if they want to advertise their food as "complete and balanced."

Know this! >> Dog foods don't just contain animals with unbalanced fats ... they contain grains and foods that also include unbalanced fats.

This is mostly to keep costs down — and the folks at AAFCO seem to be fine with this ... because they don't care unless the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio exceeds a whopping 30:1.

If that doesn't alarm you, lets put it in perspective: if you feed your dog nothing but chicken skin, the 6:3 ratio would actually be healthier than AAFCO requirements because chicken skin has a ratio of **24:1**.

| Nutrients | Units DM Basis | Growth and | Adult | Maximum |
|--|----------------|--------------|----------------------|---------|
| | | Reproduction | Maintenance | |
| | | Minimum | Minimum ^b | |
| Methionine-cystine | % | 0.70 | 0.65 | |
| Phenylalanine | % | 0.83 | 0.45 | |
| Phenylalanine-tyrosine | % | 1.30 | 0.74 | |
| Threonine | % | 1.04 | 0.48 | |
| Tryptophan | % | 0.20 | 0.16 | |
| Valine | % | 0.68 | 0.49 | |
| Crude Fat ^c | % | 8.5 | 5.5 | |
| Linoleic acid | % | 1.3 | 1.1 | |
| alpha-Linolenic acid | % | 0.08 | ND ^d | |
| Eicosapentaenoic + Docosahexaenoic acid | % | 0.05 | ND ^d | |
| (Linoleic + Arachidonic):(alpha-Linolenic + Eicosapentaenoic + Docosahexaenoic) acid Ratio | | | | 30:1 |



So if you feed our dog a commercial heat processed dog food, **it will likely be too high in pro-inflammatory omega-6 fats.**

And if you feed your dog raw meats that aren't raised 100% on pasture, they'll be too high in pro-inflammatory omega-6 fats.

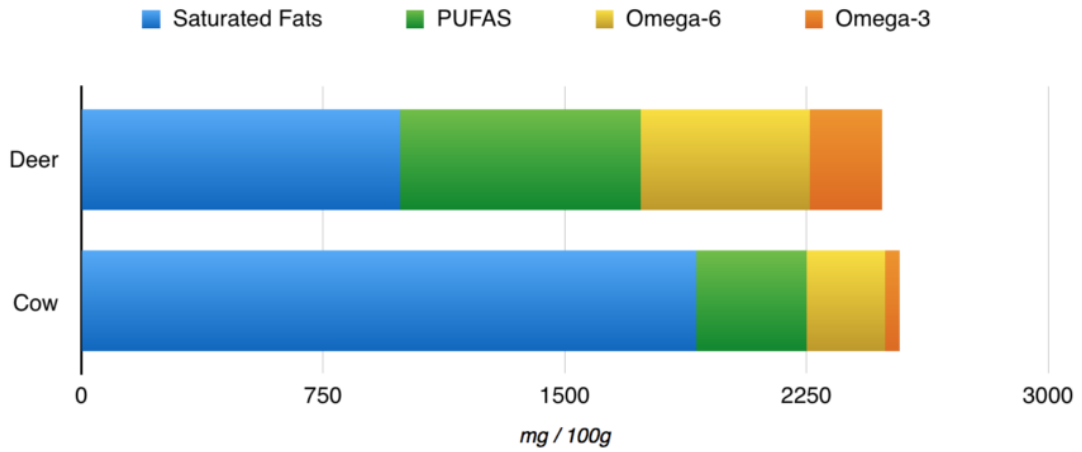
And this puts him at risk for nearly every chronic disease.

So now what?

Balancing the fats for your dog's diet.

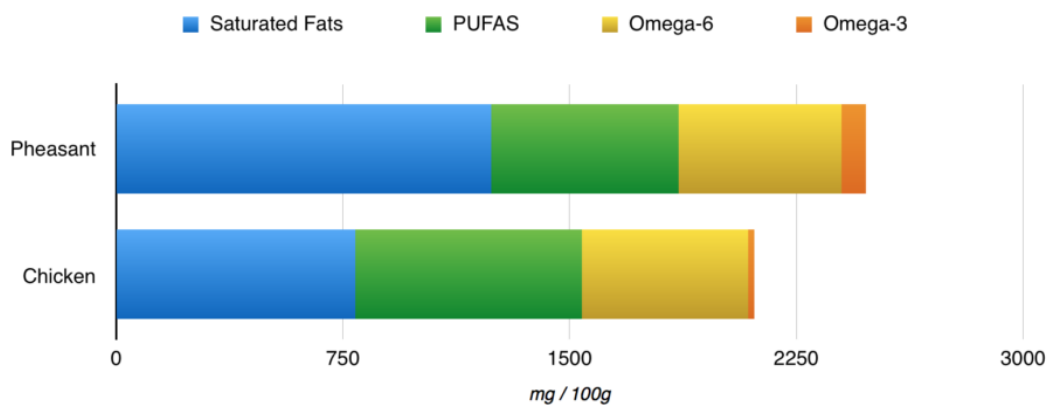
Fortunately, you can do a little tweaking to your dog's diet ... and it's actually quite easy!

Let's start with beef (and you can follow the same rules for lamb and goat).



Compared to deer and other wild ruminants, beef, lamb and goat meat are high in saturated fat, low in PUFAs and low in omega-3 fats.

Now let's look at poultry:



Compared to game poultry, chicken is lower in saturated fat, a bit higher in PUFAs but, like beef, much lower in omega-3 fats.

Looking how you can balance the fats to keep inflammation down.

There are a few foods you can add to balance the fats.

Fats to balance the Omega-3 in the dog's diet.

Fish.

Whole fish is a good addition to the diet.

Not only is it high in omega-3 fats, it also contains a lot of important minerals, protein and trace minerals.

But you need to make sure you **don't** feed fish from the Pacific because of radiation concerns ... and know that all fish will contain heavy metals and toxins.

You need to feed small fish that only feed on phytoplankton, not fish that eat other fish, because they also will contain toxins.

Look for mackerel (from the Atlantic and not king mackerel), sardines pilchards and anchovies.

Phytoplankton.

[Phytoplankton](#) is the food of the ocean and it contains the omega-3 fats that make fish high in omega-3.

It's also high in minerals and is a less toxic choice than fish because it can be grown in filtered water, free of the heavy metals and toxic chemicals found in the ocean.

And for this reason, **it's also a much more sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative to fish.**

The omega-3 in [phytoplankton](#) can also be converted to EPA and DHA, which doesn't happen well in other plant sources of omega-3. (EPA and DHA play a role in eye and brain health.)

Fish oil.

Today fish oil is not recommend anymore.

It's not ocean-friendly and we should always consider the impact we have on the environment.

But there are other problems with fish oil.

First, fish oil will oxidize and turn rancid and this is not healthy for your dog.

Fish oil is also lacking important minerals (and most dogs are deficient in minerals).

Rather feed whole fish or phytoplankton – it is included on the list in case you think you must feed it!

Coconut oil.

Coconut oil is also included to this list because it's often misunderstood. [Coconut oil carries many health benefits](#) so it can be a great addition to the diet.

But it won't correct any fatty acid imbalances because it's very high in omega-6 fats and low in omega-3.

Overall, it contains very little of them, so it's safe to add to the diet ... but it will never balance the omega-3 fats.

Make sure you buy organic, extra virgin coconut oil.

Hemp oil.

[Hemp oil](#) is extracted from hemp seeds.

You might be thinking it's marijuana but it contains no THC so it's safe and nutritious.

The nice thing about [hemp oil](#) is that it contains minerals (and vitamins) and it doesn't contain phytic acid like many other plants (phytic acid can block the absorption of the minerals zinc, iron and copper).

You'll want to look for a cold pressed source, which hasn't been heated or extracted with hexane.

It contains a good ratio of 6:3 so it can help control inflammation — but not a lot of the omega-3 can be converted to EPA and DHA.

Flaxseed oil.

Flaxseed oil is the last of the plant oils.

Flax contains a lot of omega-3 and that's a definite benefit ... but flax **also contains the anti-nutrient phytic acid, which will rob your dog of some minerals.**

Some dogs also have allergic reactions to flaxseed and like hemp, not all of the omega-3 fats can be converted to EPA and DHA (again, these are important to eye and brain health).

As with hemp oil, make sure your flaxseed oil is cold pressed.

Plant oils.

With the exception of coconut oil and hempseed oil plant oils are not recommend for dogs.

Most of them contain the anti-nutrient phytic acid.

And most contain large amounts of omega-6 fats.

It's the waste from plant oils that's fed to food animals that makes them high in omega-6, so adding plant oils to your dog's food is doubling down on the fat imbalance.

Most plant oils can also oxidize like fish oil, and this oxidation can cause dangerous reactions in the cells of the body.

They also make substances called eicosanoids in the body, which are modified fats that create inflammation in the cells (and because we want to add fats to reduce inflammation, **this doesn't seem like a very good idea at all**).

They're also loaded with dangerous Tran's fats.

So hemp oil and coconut oil are the only plant oils recommend for dogs.

Now that you know a bit about the foods to add to balance the fats in the dogs feed pan let's put this all together and make it easy!

We'll look at how to balance beef, lamb and goat, and then we'll look at balancing the fats in poultry.

Balancing the fats in beef and ruminants.

Beef, lamb and goat need to be balanced. They are:

High in saturated fat

Low in PUFAs

Low in omega-3 fats.

So, to balance beef, you need a food that's low in saturated fat, higher in PUFAs and high in omega-3 fat.

Looking at some food choices available.

| FOOD | SATURATED | PUFA | OMEGA-6 | OMEGA-3 | 6:3 |
|---------------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| RUMINANT | HIGH | LOW | MODERATE | LOW | 6.9:1 |
| FISH | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE | HIGH | 1.4:1 |
| PHYTOPLANKTON | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE | HIGH | 2:1 |
| FISH OIL | LOW | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH | 1.3:1 |
| HEMPSEED OIL | LOW | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH | 3.1.:1 |
| COCONUT OIL | HIGH | LOW | HIGH | LOW | 88:1 |
| FLAXSEED OIL | LOW | MODERATE | LOW | HIGH | 0.3:1 |

The foods most suitable to balance the fats in beef, lamb and goat are whole fish, fish oil, hempseed oil and phytoplankton (shown in the green area).

Coconut oil is much too unbalanced and much too high in saturated fat; and flaxseed oil, even if it was a safe choice, is too low in omega-6 fats.

The object isn't to reduce omega-6, because it's the fat that's most likely to cause skin issues if there's not enough in the diet.

So omega-6 fats are important ... but they just need to be balanced with a good helping of omega-3 fats.

Balancing the fats in poultry.

Poultry has a different fatty acid profile than beef.

Poultry is:

Low in saturated fat

High in PUFAs

High in omega-6 fats

Low in omega-3 fats.

Because poultry is different from beef, you need to add different foods to balance the fats.

The good foods are in green and the foods you shouldn't add are in red.

| FOOD | SATURATED | PUFA | OMEGA-6 | OMEGA-3 | 6:3 |
|---------------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| POULTRY | LOW | HIGH | HIGH | LOW | 28:1 |
| FISH | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE | HIGH | 1.4:1 |
| PHYTOPLANKTON | LOW | MODERATE | MODERATE | HIGH | 2:1 |
| FISH OIL | LOW | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH | 1.3:1 |
| HEMPSEED OIL | LOW | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH | 3.1.:1 |
| COCONUT OIL | HIGH | LOW | HIGH | LOW | 88:1 |
| FLAXSEED OIL | LOW | MODERATE | LOW | HIGH | 0.3:1 |

There aren't as many foods or oils you can add to poultry because the PUFAs in poultry are already too high.

You can add whole fish or phytoplankton and they'll do a good job helping to balance the omega-3 fats.

Fish oil isn't a good choice in this case because it's also high in PUFAs.

Amounts of fats to give.

Whole fish.

Recommended.

Feed 30 g fish for every 0.500 kg of ruminant

Feed 120 g fish for every 0.500 kg poultry.

Phytoplankton.

Recommended.

Follow the [manufacturer's instructions](#) ... some phytoplankton will contain filler and this increases the amount you need to feed.

Fish oil.

Not recommended. If you must give it, feed with ruminants only.

Hempseed oil.

Recommended. Feed with ruminants only.

Feed 2 to 3 tsp per 0.500 kg of food.

Coconut oil.

Safe to give but do not use it to balance the fats.

Amount: 1 tsp per 5 kg body weight

Flaxseed oil.

Not recommended.

If you must give it, feed with poultry only.

If feeding meats - feed **lean meats** if you plan on adding fats to your dog's diet.

Too much fat in the diet can rob your dog of critical nutrients.