

Healthy Treats for Pets

One way in which owners demonstrate love to their pets is to reward them with treats, but it's important to know what to treat them with.

If your pet has a healthy and well-balanced diet, you don't want to undo all the good work by giving them the wrong, poor quality treats.

Make sure you give your pet healthy treats. Those produced by reputable pet food manufacturers are carefully formulated, and contain balanced nutrients. Treats should also be just that - a treat! If the treats are not appealing to your pet then they are not really a treat.

- Check the grain and cereal contents when buying treats; the higher the meat content the more palatable they will be and the more likely they are to appeal to your pet.
- The more words you don't understand in a commercially prepared treat's ingredient list, the more uncertain the benefits are for your pet. Look for ingredients that are recognisable and avoid artificial preservatives and dyes.
- Teach your pet manners when taking a treat from you. They should take it slowly and gently, and not snatch at it greedily.
- Before giving your pet cooked human food as treats ensure that there are no chicken bones, large pieces of gristle or large amounts of fat that could upset their digestion.
- When training your dog outside, small, specially manufactured treats can be useful – e.g. lickable 'roller-ball' low calorie treats. Some professional trainers suggest you reward with natural foods such as cooked frankfurter sausage or dried liver.
- There's been a move toward natural or raw food treats in the last 10 years. Raw fresh meat can be associated with risks, chicken can carry pathogenic bacteria such as Salmonella and Campylobacter and pork is fatty and can cause stomach upsets while bacon and ham are very salty.
- Cooked or steamed fish is safer as raw fish may contain thiaminase, an enzyme that breaks down Vitamin B.
- Bones - raw is best - preferably whole. to gain full gum and dental care benefits. However dogs can sometimes fracture their teeth while gnawing bones. Bone is an important source of calcium, which is relatively deficient in pure meat.. Bones with knobbles on should be avoided in case a knobble is chewed off and

swallowed because it could become trapped at the back of the throat or cause an intestinal blockage. All bones should be thrown away once they are gnawed to a size that they could be swallowed for the same reasons.