

Grain-free diets are healthier.

It's a myth

Many pet owners believe that grain-free pet foods are easier to digest, provide pets with better nutrition and are less likely to cause allergies than pet foods containing grain.

The facts

Properly processed grains are highly digestible.

- While uncooked grains are poorly digested by dogs and cats, properly cooked grains in pet foods are highly digestible.
- Dogs and cats can digest the carbohydrates from grains with an efficiency of greater than 90%.^{1,2}

Diets containing grains provide excellent nutrition.³

- Grains are carbohydrates, which are an important source of energy.
- Grains also contain fiber, which supports gastrointestinal health and decreases the total fat and calories in a diet.
- Essential fatty acids and other nutrients in grains contribute to a healthy skin and coat.
- Concentrated protein sources from grains, such as corn gluten meal, can be highly digestible sources of many essential amino acids.

Grains are unlikely to cause allergies.

- Less than 1% of dogs are sensitive to grains.
- True food allergies are caused by immune reactions to proteins in the diet.
- Allergies to proteins in grains can occur, but are far less common than allergies to other protein sources, such as beef or dairy.⁴

Remember

Properly processed grains provide necessary nutrients as part of a nutritionally complete and balanced diet.

1. Carciofi AC, Takakura FS, de-Oliveira LD, et al. Effects of six carbohydrate sources on dog diet digestibility and postprandial glucose and insulin response. *J Anim Physiol Anim Nutr.* 2008;92:326–336.
2. de-Oliveira LD, Carciofi AC, Oliveira MC, et al. Effects of six carbohydrate sources on diet digestibility and postprandial glucose and insulin responses in cats. *J Anim Sci.* 2008;86:2237–2246.
3. Carbohydrates. In: Case LP, Carey DP, Hirakawa DA, eds. *Canine and Feline Nutrition.* St. Louis, MO: Mosby; 1995:17–20.
4. Verlinden A, Hesta M, Millet S, Janssens GP. Food allergy in dogs and cats: a review. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr.* 2006;46:259–273.