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Supplements Every Pet Needs

Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Omega fatty acids are essential for your pet's optimal health. Certain fatty acids including omega-3 and omega-6 types are essential for your pet as they form the basic building blocks to maintain every cell. Most commercially prepared diets tend to be rich in Omega-6 fatty acids but lacking in Omega-3s. Pets require supplementation for omega-3 fats because their bodies cannot produce them. Studies have shown that there is a link between chronic inflammation and chronic degenerative conditions with an imbalance in Omega-3 levels.

The Omega-3s that get the most attention are EPAs (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).

- EPA is important for cell membrane fluidity, circulation, skin health and immune system function. It has powerful anti-inflammatory effects, is helpful for many inflammatory and degenerative conditions, and is specifically beneficial for chronic kidney disease, arthritis, feline asthma, dermatitis, and cancer.
- DHA is the most abundant fat in the brain, and the main component of myelin. It is crucial for nervous and visual system development. Research suggests that DHA deficiency may even play a role in anxiety, hyperactivity and aggression.

Keys to selecting a good Omega-3 product

- Look for products made from wild (not farm raised) fish that are harvested sustainably, or from clean, cultivated mussels or algae.
- Only marine-sourced oils (fish oil, cod liver oil, krill oil, green-lipped mussel oil, and some algae oils) contain the pre-formed EPA and DHA that our carnivorous animals can absorb and utilize. Cats and dogs must receive EPA and DHA directly.
- Speak with your veterinarian about the level of acceptable vitamin A and D levels in the cod liver oil.
- Products should be independently tested for freshness.
- **We recommend ProNutra Professional Strength Canine and Feline Fish Oil.**

Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes break down foods so they can be absorbed and utilized by the body. When food is not properly broken down, larger particles can enter the bloodstream and set off an immune response that may lead to inflammation, allergies, and other chronic health problems. Digestive enzymes also improve digestion, reduce gas, help regulate weight and decrease inflammation throughout the body.



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In healthy pets, the pancreas supplies digestive enzymes, but as a pet ages or become immune challenged, production slows. Raw foods contain an array of digestive enzymes and cooking destroys enzymes. Supplemental digestive enzymes are especially needed by animals eating processed commercial pet food (in addition to any enzymes listed on the label). Geriatric animals may also benefit, even if they're on a raw food diet. Digestive enzymes may prevent pancreatic hypertrophy which can result from eating a commercially processed diet.

Keys to selecting a good digestive enzyme product

- Look for one from a plant or fungal source, in order for it to work in the widest range of pH and temperature. It should contain, at least: protease, amylase, lipase, and cellulose.

Probiotics

A healthy gut places a critical role in a pet's overall immunity, 70% of our total immunity comes from our gut. Probiotics include beneficial bacteria such as *L.acidophilus* and certain *Bifidobacteria*, *Enterococcus*, and *Streptococcus* species. Supplementation with probiotics helps keep healthy intestinal bacteria balanced and healthy.

The intestinal flora is an essential part of overall health. Constant back-and-forth interaction occurs between the intestinal bacteria and brain through neural, endocrine, immune and humoral links. A balanced and healthy gut has implications for not only physical but also emotional and mental health. It prevents pathogenic bacteria from gaining a foothold; produces B vitamins, vitamin K, and short-chain fatty acids; and supports normal immune system function.

Supplemental probiotics have been shown to assist in preventing or alleviating allergies, such as atopy, food allergies, and inflammatory bowel disease. They are also helpful for pets with any type of digestive problem, including vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, IBD, colitis, and even hairballs. After a pet has finished a course of antibiotics, it is an excellent time to strength the intestinal flora with probiotic supplementation.

While many commercially prepared diets claim to contain probiotics, independent testing has proven the diets lacking in live cultures.

Keys to selecting a good probiotics product

- Look for a supplement containing at least *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacteria*.
- There should be a label guarantee of live microorganisms.
- The product should be of sufficient potency (at least 100 million per dose).

NOTE: many products combine digestive enzymes with probiotics, and these can be a good, cost-effective choice, especially for fussy pets who may be challenging to administer supplements. **For**



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instance, we recommend utilizing Standard Process' Lact Enz which delivers a combined probiotic / digestive enzymes supplement.

Antioxidants

The function of antioxidants is to scavenge and neutralize oxygen free radicals. Cells make controlled quantities of free radicals as weapons against viruses, fungi, bacteria, and abnormal cells. However, excess unbalanced free radicals create oxidative stress, which can damage normal cells and create chronic inflammation. Processed pet foods are typically high in anti-inflammatory Omega-6 fatty acids, so supplementing with antioxidants is very important, especially since the diets do not contain the balancing of Omega-3 fatty acids.

Free radical damage is at the root of virtually all degenerative and inflammatory diseases. Many are surprised to learn that inflammatory diseases also include diabetes, cancer, hypothyroidism, heart disease, and cognitive dysfunction. By decreasing oxidative stress, antioxidants likely have value in disease prevention as well as treatment. At present, however, the mechanisms are still being investigated and robust scientific proof is lacking. Nevertheless, antioxidants can universally be considered helpful for most inflammatory and immune-mediated diseases.

Keys to selecting a good antioxidant product

- It should contain multiple antioxidants, such as vitamin E, carotenoids and flavonoids.
- Look for a natural or whole food-derived product, rather than one that's chemically synthesized. Natural products are typically found in l-form as opposed to d- or dl-form;
- Plant and fungal sources may be more bioactive. For cats, avoid products containing alpha lipoic acid, due to toxicity concerns.
- **We recommend Standard Process' whole food supplements – Catalyn and Min Tran for antioxidants**