

# NUTRITION FOR YOUR DOG: THE TOP 3 MYTHS ABOUT GRAINS, BY-PRODUCTS AND RAW DIETS, DEBUNKED!



When it comes to grains, by-products and raw diets — all hot topics in regard to your dog's nutrition — do you know what's myth from what's fact?

"Quality diet and nutrition are essential to helping a dog live a long, healthy life. However, many owners aren't aware of what this consists of and are looking to the latest trends and fads to help

make decisions about their dog's health," explains Purina Veterinary Communications Manager Shelly Adrian, DVM. "It's important to learn the facts behind the myths that are out there so you can make well-informed decisions about feeding your hardworking dog."

**1 MYTH:** Dogs are carnivores and should be fed a raw, meat-based diet. Cooking destroys nutrients in dog food, so raw meat provides better nutrition.

**FACT:** Dogs aren't wolves, they're omnivores. Although raw food diet proponents claim health benefits such as improved digestion, firmer stool, healthier skin and coats, and nutrition more akin to the "wild diet," very few of these claims are supported by published research. Raw food diets can actually pose serious health risks, including foodborne illness for both humans and dogs caused by bacterial contamination of uncooked meat, physical injury caused by bones, and potential nutrient imbalances or deficiencies. Certain cooking processes in the manufacture of dog food can actually increase the digestibility of protein by gelatinizing the collagen, as well as the digestibility of grains and starchy foods by altering the cellular structure of the starch granules.

**2 MYTH:** Grains are unnecessary fillers in dog food — not only are dogs allergic, they also cannot digest grains to use as energy.

**FACT:** Grains are a nutritionally valuable ingredient in dog food, as they are an important source of many nutrients such as protein, fiber, essential fatty acids, B-vitamins and minerals. Grains can also provide a source of readily digestible carbohydrates, helping to meet a crucial physiological need for glucose, the most important energy source for all cells in the body. What's more, true food allergies are rare in dogs, and the

offending substances usually aren't grains. However, Purina respects and accommodates those dog owners who are selective about particular ingredients and choose to feed an appropriate grain-free diet, offering a range of grain-free formulas that are nutritionally complete and balanced.



**3 MYTH:** By-products are just cheap, low-quality fillers used in dog food.

**FACT:** By-products are a common ingredient in dog foods and can provide a highly digestible and nutritious source of protein and essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals and healthy fats. By-products actually can deliver more essential nutrients than regular muscle meat. Purina only uses safe and clean, high-quality by-products, including nutrient-rich organ meats (livers, kidneys, lungs and spleens), corn gluten meal and tallow. Foods made with by-products also are more sustainable, allowing the use, rather than the waste, of nutritious components of a whole-food ingredient.



The most important aspect of dog food is whether it provides complete and balanced nutrition for pets. "Owners should have a good understanding of the ingredients used in their dog's food — such as grains and by-products — and the benefits they bring," Dr. Adrian says.

Owners also should research the quality and safety standards of their dog food and know who makes it, where it's made, the steps taken to ensure the quality and safety of their food, and if their food meets or exceeds FDA and AAFCO standards. Dr. Adrian suggests contacting or checking their pet food manufacturer's website or speaking with their veterinarian.

You can also visit [www.purina.com/nutrition](http://www.purina.com/nutrition) to learn more about the nutrition, quality and safety of dog food. ■

## CORRECTION

Due to an error, the *Tips From Purina Pro Plan* "Recovery Strategies for Sporting Dogs" advertorial that was published in the *Versatile Hunting Dog* September 2018 issue mistakenly reported that a dog can be given a 1 percent solution of glycerol 24 days before a trial to promote water loading to the muscles. The story should have read 24 hours. Purina regrets the error.