

Treats for Fido

Welcome back to [Paws for Peace](#). We appreciate your support of this cause. Every time you visit this site or read the newsletter or pass along this newsletter, you are helping animals. I applaud you. Please keep up the good work. Well, as promised in my last article, this segment is dedicated to offering you some tips on what types of treats I feel are acceptable for your dog. This information, like many of my viewpoints, may contradict what you have been exposed to. Don't be alarmed by this information. Changing the type of snacks you give your dog can only improve his or her life.

Crunchy dog biscuits guaranteed to keep your dog's teeth and gums in good shape is what we're led to believe. Even the "natural" ones are ok, right? Rawhide and green chew treats are great for recreational chewing, aren't they? And, of course, the yummy jerky treats at aisle 10 of the supermarket are just Fido's favorite. I think you know what's coming next. All of the previous statements are false. In fact, and this may really surprise you, there are very few treats that are healthy for your pup. There are even fewer that contribute to periodontal health. And, almost all treats on the market today contribute to our dogs' health problems. From skin and coat issues, to digestive disorders, to periodontal health and obesity, the treats we give our dog need to be analyzed as much as the food we feed. Why? Because we love giving our dogs treats. This may not apply to everyone. But, we love giving our dog a bone, so to speak. And, this "positive reinforcement era", as I like to call it, our dog even gets a treat if he looks at us. So, we better make sure the treat we are giving is appropriate. How can we make sure you ask? One simple word; Ingredients!

Ingredients are the key to a good dog treat. How do you think they make it so crunchy? It's loaded with starch! In my opinion, starch is the root cause of many of issues in the pet industry. But, we're led to believe that our dogs need carbohydrates for energy. This statement is absolutely false. Dogs derive their energy from primarily from animal fat and protein. Are there exceptions to this rule? Yes. Dogs can utilize some energy from carbohydrates. But, too much of it metabolizes into fat. Animal fat doesn't metabolize into fat. It's already fat. Protein metabolizes into amino acids and usable energy. Carbohydrates do have a benefit for lactating bitches. It helps them manufacture milk for the pups. Other than that, try to avoid excess starch. So, read your ingredient list. Stay away from starch, sugars and harmful ingredients. Here's a list of some ingredients to avoid (in no particular order); heavy starches, molasses, glens – wheat, corn, etc (anything gluten is BAD – they will hide gluten on an ingredient panel by calling it things like pea protein, potato protein, rice proteinate). Then of course the really harmful, potentially toxic ingredients like BHT, BHA, ethoxyquin and Propylene Glycol. Propylene Glycol is everywhere!! Also be careful of treats that contain "natural flavoring". What exactly does that mean? It means it can be anything. Good

companies will tell you how it's "naturally flavored". Stay away from the artificially dyed foods. Some of the colorings they used are potentially carcinogenic. And, finally, rawhides and green chew treats are both indigestible. Green chew treats contain large amounts of gluten that cause all sorts of issues starting in the mouth all the way down the ENTIRE digestive tract. And, rawhides are loaded with chlorine and other chemicals.

So, what type of treats should we offer? In a word; meat. Yes, all roads for a healthy dog lead to meat. There are quite a few meat based treats out there today. You just have to look. Some contain rice flour and similar binders. But, the really good ones have very few ingredients in them. Liver treats are great. Dried chicken breast can be a nice reward. Chicken liver, lamb lungs and more are all great choices. And, of course, many animal parts available are good as well. But, a major periodical out there will lead you to believe you should stay away from "by-products", which is just ridiculous. Bull sticks, tendons, roasted bones, ribs, shoulder bones, trachea, tails, chicken feet, dried intestine and many other animal parts are far better for our dogs than most of the crap that is force fed to us and, ultimately, our beloved pets. They are all by-products. Of course, when giving bone or a new treat, you should always supervise your pet. In fact, you should supervise your pet even when you give anything new, even a toy, especially with strong chewers. And, for you raw feeders, you all know the benefit of giving a nice raw, meaty bone! I know you're probably wondering how you can keep your dog's teeth nice and clean if he can't have all the stuff I listed in the previous paragraph. It's so simple it will amaze you. The answer is in the conclusion.

The conclusion to this will be a true story of my own experience during a vet visit with my oldest Pit Bull, Jake, when he was about 8 years old. Every visit to the vet is a debate in the waiting. I would be ridiculed for feeding my dogs raw meat and bones. So, one visit, the vet was commenting on how white Jake's teeth are and that he doesn't even have "dog breath". She was so ecstatic to see how I was keeping up on his periodontal health. She asked, "How often do you brush his teeth? You must brush them every day?" My answer was this; "Doc, I have no idea when the last time was that I brushed his teeth". She then probed, "So what do you give him to keep his teeth so white and his breath so fresh? "Well doc", I said, "I don't give him anything that turns his teeth brown or makes his breath smell". She knew exactly where I was going with the conversation and just changed the subject. She had no rebuttal. And, the whole experience just reinforced to how well I am taking care of my dogs. I hope this information helps you take better care of your pets. Until next time....

Holistically yours,

Jeff Coltenback