Gluten-free diets are healthier.

It's a myth

Although only 1% to 2% of people have celiac disease and require a gluten-free diet, many more people are jumping on the gluten-free bandwagon in hopes it will help them lose weight or feel better. And many of them assume that a gluten-free diet is what's best for their pets, too.

The facts

Gastrointestinal problems associated with gluten are rare in dogs.

- Gluten-induced enteropathy (celiac disease) is very rare in dogs and has been reported primarily in Irish Setters.[1]

- Pets with celiac disease react to the proteins (gluten) in wheat, rye and barley.

- The protein in corn gluten does not cause GI problems, even in individuals with celiac disease.

Gluten is an excellent source of high-quality protein.

- Gluten is the concentrated protein from grain after all the starch has been removed.

- Corn gluten meal contains approximately 60% to 70% protein.

- It provides essential amino acids that form the building blocks for protein.

- Gluten is highly digestible.[2]

Gluten provides structure to pet food.

- Just as wheat gluten is added to breads to enhance the texture, a small amount in pet food helps canned formulas, kibbles and treats hold their shape.

Protein Concentrations in Common Pet Food Ingredients (as fed)[3,4]

Poultry By-product Meal	70%
Meat and Bone Meal	55%
Corn Gluten Meal	67%

Remember

Gluten from various grains is a nutritious ingredient that provides a concentrated source of protein in pet foods. GI problems associated with wheat gluten are rare in dogs and cats, and corn gluten does not cause problems, even in pets with celiac disease.

1. Case LP, et al., eds. *Canine and Feline Nutrition*. 3rd ed. St. Louis, MO: Mosby; 2011:152.
2. Lawrence KR, et al. Comparison of wheat gluten and spray-dried animal plasma in diets for nursery pigs. *J Anim Sci*. 2004;82(12):3635–3645.
3. Feed Commodity Bulletin. Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.
4. Hand MS, et al., eds. *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition*. 4th ed. Topeka, KS: Mark Morris Institute; 2000:141.

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