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Why fat in the diet isn't "bad" when you are a dog...

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Most people in our modern society have been conditioned to believe that fat is bad - period.

When people want to take good care of their dogs, it is all too easy to conclude that the same goes for their dog...

Not true.

The dog is a completely different species, and its needs are totally different from what a human needs. What is good for you could be very bad for your dog - and vice versa!

Raw fat versus processed (cooked) fat

The fat you will find in human food items in the grocery stores or supermarkets is very rarely *raw*. If it were, we might not have experienced the problems we do! The processed fat causes a lot of problems for us that are totally indisputable, yet there are prime examples of Inuit people in Northern Canada and Greenland (Denmark) who eat lots of raw fat from seals and whales - and sustain a very supreme health! Notice: *raw*....

However, cook some bacon on a frying pan and let the fat melt off. When done, let the fat cool down again and see what you get. It does not take a chemist to conclude that the lard you get this way simply no longer chemically is the same as the raw fat was! It has undergone some irreversible changes to its chemical structure, and those changes render it a totally different substance, also in regards to its nutritional value!

Mind you, it still classifies chemically as "fat", meaning "glycerol esters of fatty acids" - which the chemical term is. But the heated substances have a different chemical structure than those that never have been heated. The unheated ones are the only ones that are available in nature as a food source. The heated ones simply don't exist in nature as a food source, and the metabolism in the body cannot transform them back to what they were before they got heated.

How dogs use fat in the metabolism

Another important thing to keep in mind is that dogs' metabolism is much more effective than the human metabolism when it comes to dealing with fat!

Let me give one example to illustrate this: Dogs don't have our problems when the issue is weight loss. The human body is quick to convert excess energy into fat - and very reluctant to let go of that fat again when energy supply is low. Instead, we literally burn up our muscle protein and leave the fat depots intact... That's why you feel fatigue when going on a diet, and that's why diets generally don't work - you gain the lost weight (plus some) immediately you start eating "normally" again.

That's not the case with dogs. Dogs do not feel fatigue if you skip a meal or two or three. They could not survive as hunters if that were the case. (They might not appreciate your attempts to make them fast, though - but that is exclusively because you developed *habits* that justify their expectations.)

I have seen my male dogs volunteer up to 12 days of fast when my bitch was in heat. These males certainly did not lose energy - only weight. And they quickly gained exactly the lost weight in just three weeks when the estrus was over. And I have seen my Search & Rescue dog teams work significantly more efficiently when the dogs worked on an empty stomach! Even *days* in a row. No human could do any of that..

Supplying fat for work - not carbohydrate

Many people have seen reports of liver and kidney problems coming from feeding fat. However, those studies are either conducted for humans or based on using cooked fat (or both) so they have no relevance whatsoever for our dogs. Personally, I suspect other culprits for those liver and kidney problems: Vaccination, flea protection, heart worm medication, de-worming, shampoos - there is a long list of dangerous chemicals available for people who do not know chemistry....

It is a well-known experience also from people who work their dogs physically hard (like sled dogs, Search and Rescue dogs etc.) that the dogs perform much better when given extra amounts of fat in their diet. Not extra protein, and certainly not extra carbohydrate. But fat. Totally opposite of what would be good for a human. Too much protein can cause allergy problems. Grain products (*our* main source of carbohydrates and energy) cause problems with the digestion of other food components and are not part of a natural diet at all.

This leaves fat as the only responsible choice for supply of extra energy. Raw, of course...

Mogens Eliassen

Mogens Eliassen holds a Ph.D. level degree in Chemistry from Århus University, Denmark and has 30+ years of experience working with dogs, dog owners, dog trainers, and holistic veterinarians as a coach, lecturer, and education system developer. He publishes a free newsletter "[The Peeing Post](#)" containing lots of tips and advice on dog problems of all kinds, particularly about training, behavioral problems, feeding, and health care.

For more information about Mogens Eliassen, including links to other articles he has published, please send a short e-mail to contact@k9joy.com.