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Food To Die For



This is the “before” me on an expensive, super-premium “natural” canned food combined with a top vitamin supplement. See my ugly red tears? I’m mortified to have you seeing me look like this, but I’ve swallowed my pride to help save your dog’s life. You now owe me BIG TIME!

It was bad enough that I looked like a canine Vampira when this photo was taken. My blood and urine tests, and Jiggy’s, revealed inner scenarios that were even more revolting. I was lacking in Vitamin D, folic acid, phosphorus and chromium. Jigs and I shared deficiencies in B-6, lecithin, calcium, manganese, selenium, and bioflavonoids, plus we both had poor fat absorption and excess sodium. Jiggy, who was on a top “medical” food for his sick liver, showed additional deficiencies in Vitamins A, C, D, and E, digestive enzymes, zinc and copper. Both our foods were

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labeled “complete and balanced.” I’m prompted to ask, as compared to what?

Upon seeing our test results, our new holistic vet, Dr. Tamara Hebbler, convinced Mom to switch us to fresh “people food” and supplements. And guess what happened? Within days of changing our diet, Jiggy’s heart-stopping breath (previously a barrier to our romance) became give-me-a smooch-baby fresh. We practically had to leap out of the way to avoid the tartar tumbling from our teeth. Then one fine day we noticed our red tears were gone. My career as a supermodel was back on track.



How can you tell if your dog’s food is hurting your dog? Take a good look at her. Does she have red gums, brown teeth, bad breath, smelly ears, ugly red tears or gummy gunk in her eyes? (Hint: she shouldn’t.) Does she climb the walls with hyperactivity or languish about like a lump? How’s her temper? Pissy? Maybe her coat’s dull or sheds in fistfuls? Or she has fleas, allergies, bowel

disease, recurring ear infections or parasites, anal gland problems or a musty doggy smell? Does she suffer from arthritis, cancer, diabetes, liver, kidney or heart disease? With so many dogs suffering ill health, something universal has to be at fault. I can't promise you that an improved diet will fix everything that's wrong with your dog, but I can tell you that Jiggy's blood test results improved 50% in just one month. Within *three* months, both of our blood tests were 75% back to normal. Clearly, a good part of the source of our health problems had been lurking in Mom's pantry.

The way this dog sees it, most of us aren't on *health* food diets, we're on *fast* food diets. You can almost hear manufacturers say: "Do you want fries and a shake with that?"

Are things really that bad? Judge for yourself. After commercial food sickened her two dogs in 1990, Ann Martin, author of *Foods Pets Die For*, began a decade-long quest to find out what could legally go into her dogs' food. What she learned was beyond shocking. Believe it or not (I didn't want to), manufacturers regularly serve up proteins from "downer" animals, what inspectors call "4-D": the dead, dying, diseased and disabled. (Why so surprised? Feeding downer animals to cattle is what Mad Cow disease is all about, and cattle are part of the Human food chain!)

Pet foods may legally contain roadkill, zoo animals, and even euthanized dogs and cats. Ann's research uncovered food with traces of the euthanasia agent sodium pentobarbital; sweepings from mill and rendering plant floors; moldy grain; restaurant grease; residual antibiotics and hormones; artificial texture, color and flavor agents; and chemical preservatives banned in *Human* food in the U.S. and in *pet foods* in other countries. If you like real-life horror stories, read an excerpt from Ms. Martin's book at www.newsagepress.com.

Okay, you have your yummy ingredients. (Yeah, right.) Next comes processing, cooking at moderate to high temperatures for hours until bacteria and most of the vitamins and enzymes are gone. (Ever wonder why they add back vitamins?) Unfortunately, endotoxins (produced by the bacteria) aren't destroyed, nor are mycotoxins (produced by molds and fungi). In fact, mycotoxins,

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which are potentially present in all dried foods, have caused at least two manufacturers to recall products after dogs fell ill or died.

Bet you don't know how the dog food industry operates. Well, picture a pack of lions with a carcass. The biggest cats feed first, tearing



off the best stuff for themselves. Then the hyenas dig in. After the hyenas come the jackals, and so forth, all the way down to the dung beetles. The same thing happens in the pet food industry. The parent company takes what it wants for you Humans, selling the leftovers (mostly food earmarked as unfit for Human consumption) as food for pets. Ever hear the expression, “The Devil gets the hindmost?” Well, your little angel is that Devil (or dung beetle). This profit-making from refuse and surplus has built a

\$14 billion a year industry in the U.S. alone. If you want to learn more, go to www.api4pets.org and search for “Pet Food.” I bet you won't come away hungry.

I have more bad news. You Humans have been sold myths along with the food.

MYTH #1: “People food” is bad for dogs. My ancestors decided to live with *your* ancestors because they wanted to share Human food rather than hunt for their own; in more recent times, your grandparents fed our great, great...great grandparents their leftovers. Anyway, if pet food companies think the food Humans eat is bad for dogs, why do their ads promote “real” beef and “real” lamb? Maybe the “people food” that's bad for us is junk food. And maybe what's really bad about “people food” is its affect on company profits.

MYTH #2: Dogs shouldn't eat fruits and vegetables. Our ancestors were either opportunistic carnivores or scavenging

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other than to push it away? If we initially turn up our noses at fresh food, maybe it's because we're addicted to fat-laden junk food, just like some of you are. Once we get used to fresh food, we'll love it.

MYTH #7: Dogs' nutritional needs are too complicated for Humans to figure out. Our bodies are so similar to yours that they test your products on us (not something Jigs and I favor), so am I missing something here? If you've managed to stay healthy yourself, with just a few adjustments, you can keep us healthy, too. (On the other paw, if you live on junk food, tequila shooters and cigarettes, better keep us on a good commercial food.)

MYTH #8: The most nutritious food comes in cans and in bags. Highly-processed food is better than fresh? "Meat flavoring" is better than meat? Mom has some real estate she'd like to sell you.

MYTH #9: Quality food is too expensive. Wholesome dog food doesn't have to be expensive, and can be a bigger bargain than processed food even *before* you figure in health benefits. *After* health benefits, there's no contest. If you feed your dog junk, sooner or later she'll probably get sick and require expensive medical care.



MYTH #10: “Complete and balanced” means optimum. Foods can get this designation in two ways: with a chemical analysis (meaning that these foods theoretically meet a certain standard) or by passing feeding trials. Trials are a higher standard, but can ultimately be met by exclusive feeding of the food for six months to six dogs. Even though most of us want to live longer than this, there’s no requirement to follow dogs past the initial period (although some companies do). Here’s another shocker. One food in a brand “family” might pass the trial and allow the rest of the “relatives” to tag along. I don’t know about some of *your* relatives, but considering mine, that idea’s pretty scary.

Do you know *exactly* what you’re feeding your dog? Are you sure? Remember when Dorothy and her friends thought the Wizard of Oz was invincible until little Toto pulled back the curtain to reveal a befuddled imposter? Well, that’s what I want to do. I’m pulling back the curtain on dog food. Grab your cans and bags and let’s take a look at those labels.

Want to read more? You'll find the rest of this chapter, and much, much more, in Scared Poopless: The Straight Scoop on Dog Care.

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