

A LINK BETWEEN DILATED CARDIOMYOPATHY AND GRAIN-FREE DIETS?



Recently, veterinary cardiologists have identified a possible link between cases of dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) and “grain free” boutique diets high in lentils, peas, other legume seeds (pulses) and/or potatoes.

The FDA is currently investigating this connection, which likely involves many complex factors. Studies have demonstrated that some dogs receiving these diets have low blood taurine levels, however **testing and/or supplementing taurine alone is insufficient** given that many reported dogs have normal taurine levels. Additionally, almost all reported diets had methionine-cystine values above the recommended minimum nutritional requirement, the significance of which is unclear.

WHAT IS DCM?

DCM is a disease of the heart muscle in which the heart muscle (ventricle) becomes weak and has decreased ability to pump blood. As the disease progresses, congestive heart failure can develop. Signs of congestive heart failure include increased respiratory rate and effort, coughing, lethargy, and collapse. See our website www.evolutionvet.com for more information on congestive heart failure.

DCM is most commonly diagnosed in middle-aged and older large breed dogs. We know that some breeds (Golden Retrievers and Labradors) are especially sensitive to low-taurine diets, and these breeds tend to have low taurine levels when reported. Golden Retrievers and Labradors are also the most commonly reported breeds. Increased cases of DCM in atypical smaller breeds have also been reported in households feeding certain grain free diets.

Reported Grain Free Diets Associated with DCM

Acana	Merrick
Zignature	California Natural
Taste of the Wild	Natural Balance
4Health	Orijen
Earthborn Holistic	Nature's Variety
Blue Buffalo	Nutrisource
Nature's Domain	Nutro
Fromm	Rachel Ray Nutrish



CARDIOLOGY UPDATE

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DIET

Visit the World Small Animal Veterinary Association Global Nutrition Guidelines for more information on selecting the proper diet for your dog.

www.wsava.org/guidelines/global-nutrition-guidelines

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M FEEDING A GRAIN-FREE DIET?

Check the Label



Consult Your Vet



Educate & Monitor

Consider alternatives to your grain free diet. Vetnutrition.tufts.edu is an excellent resource for learning more about pet food and selecting the right food for your pet. For pets with unique nutrition needs, consider consulting a veterinary nutritionist.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DOG IS DIAGNOSED WITH DCM?

- Change the diet. Supplementing taurine alone is **not** sufficient.
- Echocardiography (heart ultrasound) is the only test that can reliably confirm DCM. Testing taurine levels alone is not sufficient.
- Work with your veterinary cardiologist to diagnose DCM and monitor for improvement. Most dogs improve with diet change and medical management.
- Supplement taurine from a brand with good quality control such as NOW, Solgar, Swanson, Twinlab, or Vitamin Shoppe.
- Report the case to the FDA.

STAY TUNED!

The veterinary cardiology community is closely monitoring and actively researching this issue. I will provide updates as they emerge.

Our exceptional, compassionate care is available via mobile appointments at various veterinary hospitals and stationary cardiology appointments at Animal Urgent Care (64th and Ward) and our new Lakewood hospital, Evolution Veterinary Specialists.



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