

Pick the right dietary supplement

Pick the right dietary supplement to benefit your pooch

Dietary supplements for dogs are all over. No longer are they sold only at the veterinarian's office. They've popped up at pet shops, on supermarket shelves, and human nutrition centers. But how effective are these products?

"Quality is a big subject," says pet herb doctor. "Some companies put only scant quantities of ingredients in for selling purposes, but they are not nutritionally or therapeutically useful. In addition, old herbs or bad-quality ingredients may not have the potential or be absorbed by the body."

Many vitamins contain calcium carbonate because it's cheap, but the body doesn't absorb this sort of calcium substantially. However, the more expensive calcium lactate is readily absorbed, which makes it a more desirable ingredient, herb doctor says.

Mark limitations are also a subject. For example, there are 5 grades of Korea ginseng. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration allows a label to list the ingredient only as ginseng without an indication of quality.

The best way to choose a quality supplement is to study yourself. Look for these elements to find out product quality:

- What are the company's sources of drugs? Do they purchase from good growers and reapers who know exactly when to reap for optimum potency and keep confirmable reap/lot records? You can find out some of this information by talking with a sales representative.
- Does the product bear the Good Manufacturing Practices seal? The GMP Certification Program of the National Nutritional Foods Association (NNFA) assures product safety, quality, and label integrity in the dietary supplement industry.
- Does the product hold the CL Seal of Approval? ConsumerLab.com is an independent supplement-testing service that issues reports on ingredients, potency, purity, consistency, and bioavailability of well known products.
- Are products produced according to U.S. Pharmacopeia guidelines? This non-political organization has launched quality standards for medicines and health products. If a product satisfies its guidelines, the label should say so.
- Are ingredients screened for a wide range of contaminants? Chemicals and other toxins from plant food compromise plants, and molds and MYCO toxins can issue during storage. Chemicals and other toxins can cause cancer, skin problems, and neurological disease. What scientific testing does the manufacturer conduct?
- Are ingredients certified organic or human-grade quality? Although more expensive, organic or human-grade - certified by USP - are more authentic and effective than lower feed grades.
- Who developed the product and is that person involved with the company? Has a honored veterinarian or herbalist who knows animals and plants formulated the product? What is that per background?
- Is there entire disclosure on the label? High-quality products list all ingredient including fillers, as well as the plant names to ensure exact plant species. Labels should include potency, milligram or percentage of ingredients, dosage information, lot number and an expiration date.
- Avoid standardized extracts. Drugs frequently expect the synergy of stances in the full plant to develop desired effect. Isolating only one portion of the plant often doesn't work
- Is the product designed for animal? Products designed by doctors for people and then repackaged with animal label might not be appropriate effective for pets.

- What is the company's reputation? How long have they been in the natural-products market? Do holistic veterinarians recommend their products?

- Beware mainstream sources. Avoid saving brands and discount-store private labels with low prices. While not always the case, low prices sometimes mean low quality.

Before giving your dog any nutritional supplement, consult your veterinarian. Many recommend a diet meat, vegetables, grasses, and grains which reduces the need for supplements. However, if your dog needs supplementation, give it the best quality products.

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