HOW REAL FOOD PREVENTS COMMON AILMENTS IN DOGS: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

With the current shortage of veterinarians, which will only worsen, dog parents must have the knowledge required to keep their dogs healthy and fit. Six of the ten most common unscheduled issues, including skin issues (allergies and ear infections), gastrointestinal disturbances, dental disorders, obesity, joint pain, and cancer, can be prevented or treated by feeding your dog fresh whole food.

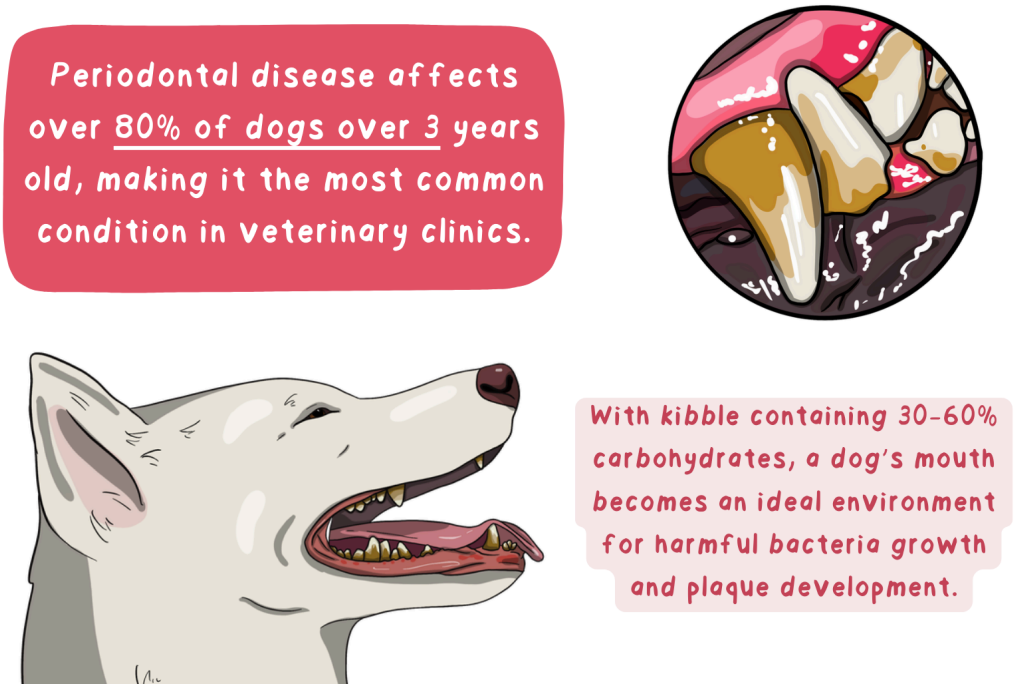
Common Ailments Prevented by a Real Food Diet in Dogs

Feeding dogs whole, real food can prevent common ailments by improving their overall health and immune function and reducing inflammation. Several

studies have explored the effects of whole-food diets compared to traditional commercial pet foods, highlighting the advantages.

Dental Disease

Periodontal disease affects more than 80% of dogs over three years of age, making it the most common disease in dogs seen in veterinary clinics. Approximately 92.5% of dogs are offered dry food, with 72.6% receiving 90% or more of their daily intake from dry kibble and 19.5% being fed exclusively dry food. If the answer to preventing dental disease is feeding dry, hard kibble, the incidence of periodontal diseases should be less than 10% of dogs.



The formation of plaque results in bacteria and food particles accumulating along the gum line and tooth surfaces. Because dogs lack salivary amylase, enzymatic digestion of starch is not initiated in the mouth. With kibble containing 30-60% carbohydrates, the ideal conditions are present in the dog's mouth for the growth of harmful bacteria and the development of plaque.

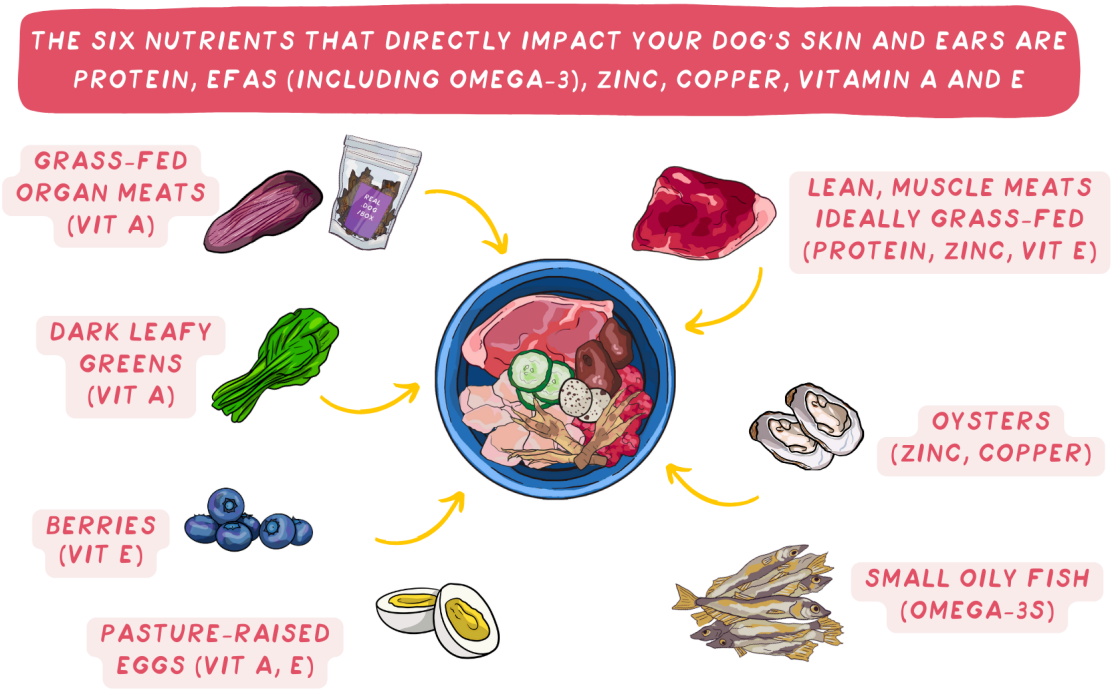
Commercial dental chews contain the same high levels of carbohydrates, doing little to prevent plaque formation and dental cleaning. So what is the answer? A species-appropriate diet with raw meaty bones as the foundation!

A real food diet consisting of raw meaty bones, high-quality protein from organically pasture-raised animals, liver and other secreting organ, seafood, and fiber all provide the essential nutrients to maintain your dog's overall health, including excellent dental health. Probiotics containing *Streptococcus thermophilus, Lactobacillus plantarum, and Lactobacillus rhamnosus* have been shown to improve the oral microbiome in dogs. A balanced oral microbiome will provide a protective barrier against pathogenic microorganisms.

Raw meaty bones provide a natural cleaning action on your dog's teeth. The tendons and ligaments can floss between the teeth. Air-dried poultry feet, cow and pig ears, and beef backstraps are commercially available chews appropriate for dogs. Professional dental cleaning may be necessary for some fresh-fed dogs, but the incidence of dental disease will significantly decrease.

Skin Issues

The six nutrients that have been shown to impact your dog's skin and ears directly are protein, essential fatty acids (EFA), including Omega-3, zinc, copper, vitamin A, and vitamin E. When these nutrients are deficient, singly or combined, your dog can experience chronic skin disorders and ear infections.



A real food diet with a wide variety of nutrients will provide all these critical nutrients. If your dog is experiencing significant skin disorders or chronic ear infections, you can focus on specific whole foods to increase the levels of these nutrients.

The source of the protein is significant as the meat from grass-fed versus grain-fed animals has completely different nutrient profiles. Grass-fed beef has significantly less monounsaturated fat than grain-fed beef and up to five times as much omega-3.

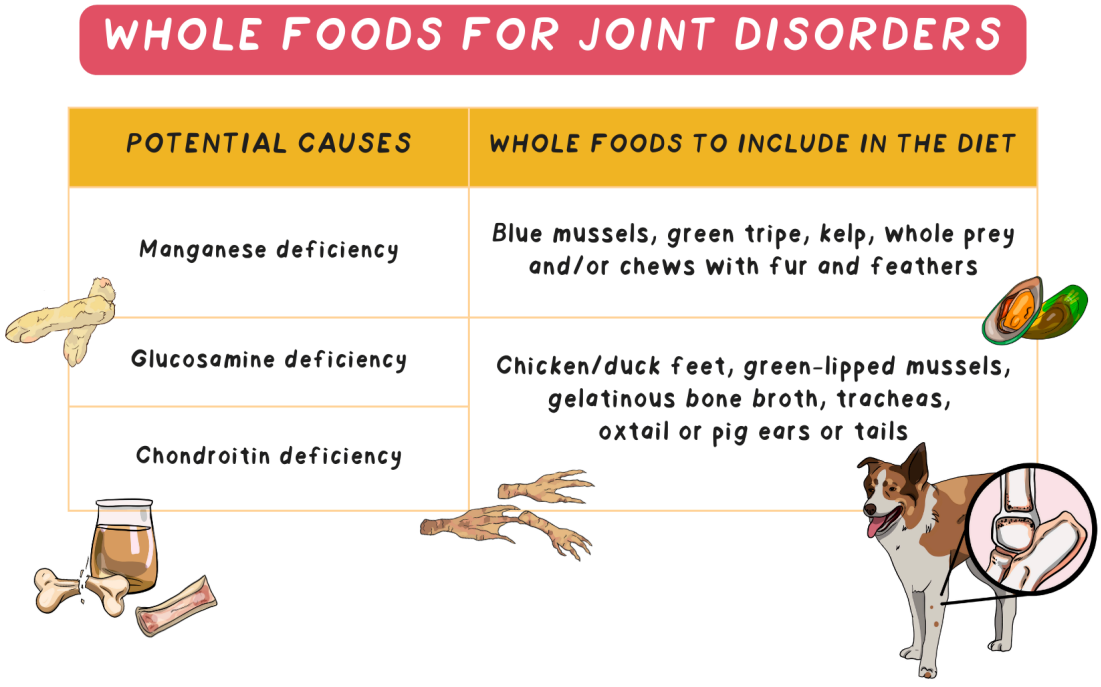
Dogs deficient in essential fatty acids develop skin changes, including scaly and flaky skin, fur matting, loss of skin elasticity, hair loss, a dry and dull coat, and a widespread redness and scaling of the skin. The outer skin layer can thicken, creating a dense horny layer, such as a corn or callosity. Ear infections are another consequence of EFA deficiency. Fatty fish like sardines, herring, mackerel, and anchovies are ideal additions to your dog's diet to improve his skin and hair coat.

Copper and zinc deficiencies can be controlled by feeding high-quality protein from pasture-raised animals, small fatty fish, raw meaty bones, and free-range eggs. Oysters are an exceptional source of zinc and copper. Other sources of copper include beef liver, bone marrow, and avocados.

Vitamins A and E can be supplemented with whole food sources. Grass-fed beef and liver and free-range eggs are a great source of both vitamins. Leafy greens and carrots supply vitamin A, while salmon, mango, and blackberries are good sources of vitamin E.

Joint Pain and Disease

The American Animal Hospital Association estimates that one in five dogs (20%) experience joint issues in their lifetimes, resulting in pain and mobility challenges, with a higher percentage in dog breeds prone to specific joint problems. Joint disease can result from a combination of factors, including genetics, age, obesity, injury, trauma, and overuse of joints. Chronic inflammation caused by an inappropriate diet can contribute to joint disease.



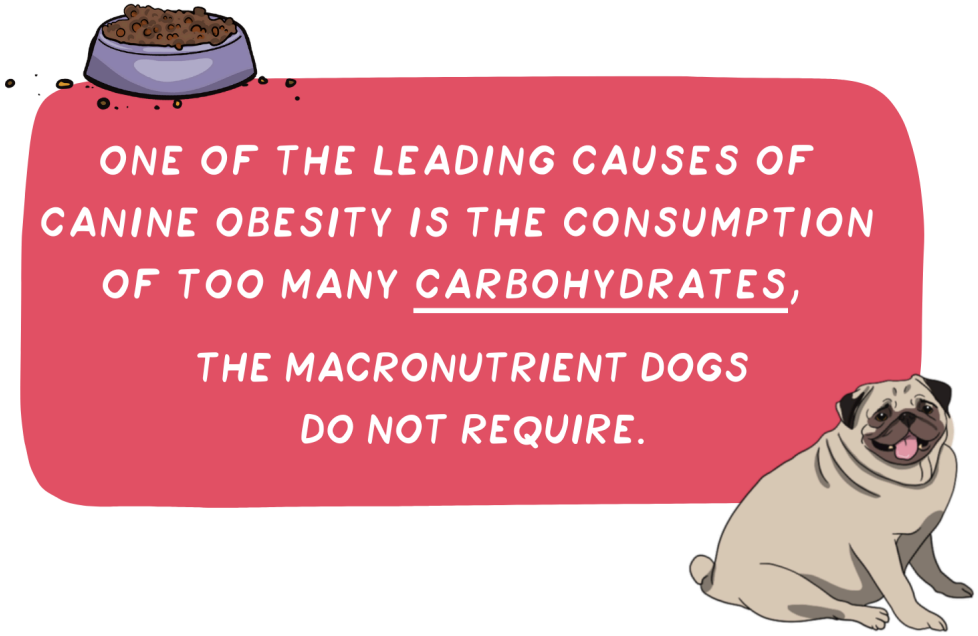
Switching your dog to a real, whole-food diet will significantly impact joint pain and mobility. Shifting your dog from a diet with roughly 50% carbohydrate content to one with 5% or less will allow his body to utilize fat rather than carbohydrates as the primary energy source.

Whole food supplements like poultry feet, green-lipped mussels, tracheas, and other cartilaginous animal parts will supply your dog with glucosamine, chondroitin, and collagen to support joint health.

Studies have shown that many dogs with CCL ruptures are deficient in manganese. Fur and feathers are excellent sources of manganese. You can give your dog furred items such as ears from rabbits, cows, lambs, boars, or rabbit feet as a source of manganese. Manganese can also be found in cloves, ginger, cilantro, coconut meat, broccoli, pumpkin seeds, green tripe, green leafy vegetables, and nuts.

Obesity and Weight Management

The latest estimate is that over 56% of all dogs are overweight or obese. Dog parents need to understand the dangers of obesity and ways to prevent it. Understanding how their dog's food and exercise impact their dog's health will aid them in making the right choices for their dog.



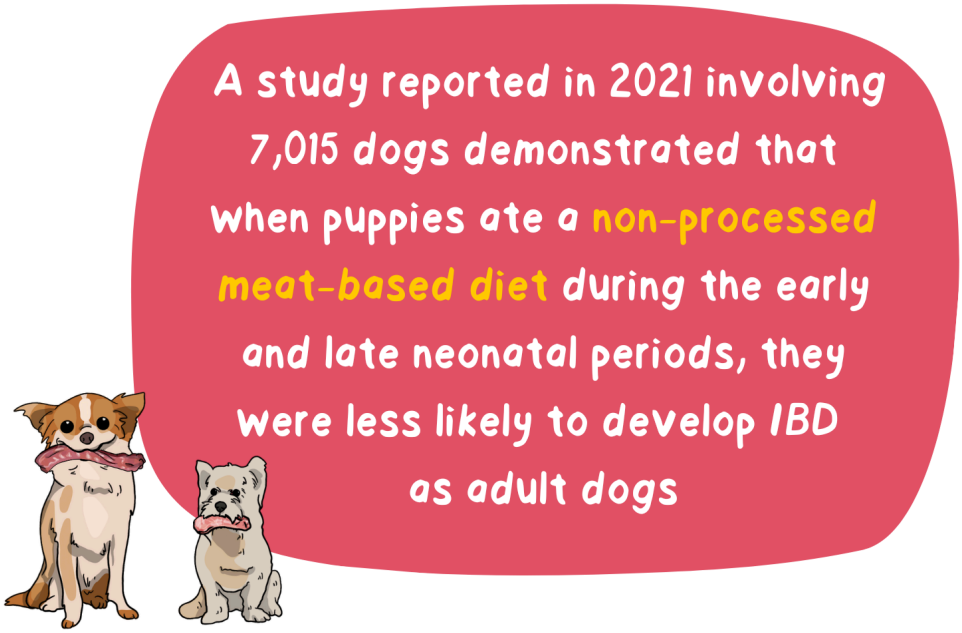
Obesity is linked to many chronic disease conditions in dogs, including joint disorders, diabetes, and cancer. Providing a species-appropriate diet can prevent obesity and consequential diseases.

The ideal diet for the overweight or obese dog is a ketogenic diet, which is high in fat, with moderate levels of high-quality protein and low levels of carbohydrates. When fed a ketogenic diet, a dog's body breaks down fat into molecules called ketones, which are circulated in the blood and become the primary energy source. A ketogenic diet allows the body to burn fat instead of carbohydrates for energy.

Following the recommendations of the Real Ancestral (6X) Diet™ of 10-12% raw meaty bones, 63-65% fattier cuts of muscle meat, 5% liver, 5% other secreting organs,10% seafood, and 5% fur or low glycemic vegetables contains minimal carbohydrates and no ultra-processed ingredients. Proteins with higher fat levels include duck, goose, lamb, pork, and beef. The standard Real Ancestral diet supplies 49% protein, 45% fat, and 6% carbohydrates, but the fattier meats can increase the fat content to over 50%.

Gastrointestinal Disturbances

In dogs, gastrointestinal (GI) tract disorders can range from a simple case of vomiting and diarrhea to a life-threatening case of gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV) or bloat. Imbalances of the gut microbiome often cause disorders such as leaky gut syndrome, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, chronic diarrhea, and inflammatory bowel disease.



The standard conventional therapy for diarrhea has been the antibiotic Metronidazole or Flagyl. Many veterinarians automatically prescribe this, even for repeated bouts of diarrhea, despite the growing evidence that Metronidazole can cause long-term negative impacts on a dog's gut microbiome. However, whole foods can be used instead to treat diarrhea.

The general treatment is to reintroduce a bland diet after 12 - 24 hours of fasting. Once the vomiting and diarrhea have subsided, lean muscle meats, such as quail, goat, rabbit, turkey, venison, camel or kangaroo, raw meaty bones, and plain pumpkin can be provided. Bone broth and slightly salted water should be offered to your dog to maintain hydration.

Due to the threat of hypoglycemia, toy breeds, dogs under 10 pounds, and young puppies under six months should not fast for more than six to eight hours.
Marshmallow root is good for calming the gastrointestinal tract and reducing inflammation. Providing this herb to a dog will reduce inflammation, increase urine production to aid in removing the excess water in the body, inhibit the growth of bacteria, viruses, and fungi in the intestines, and boost the immune system.

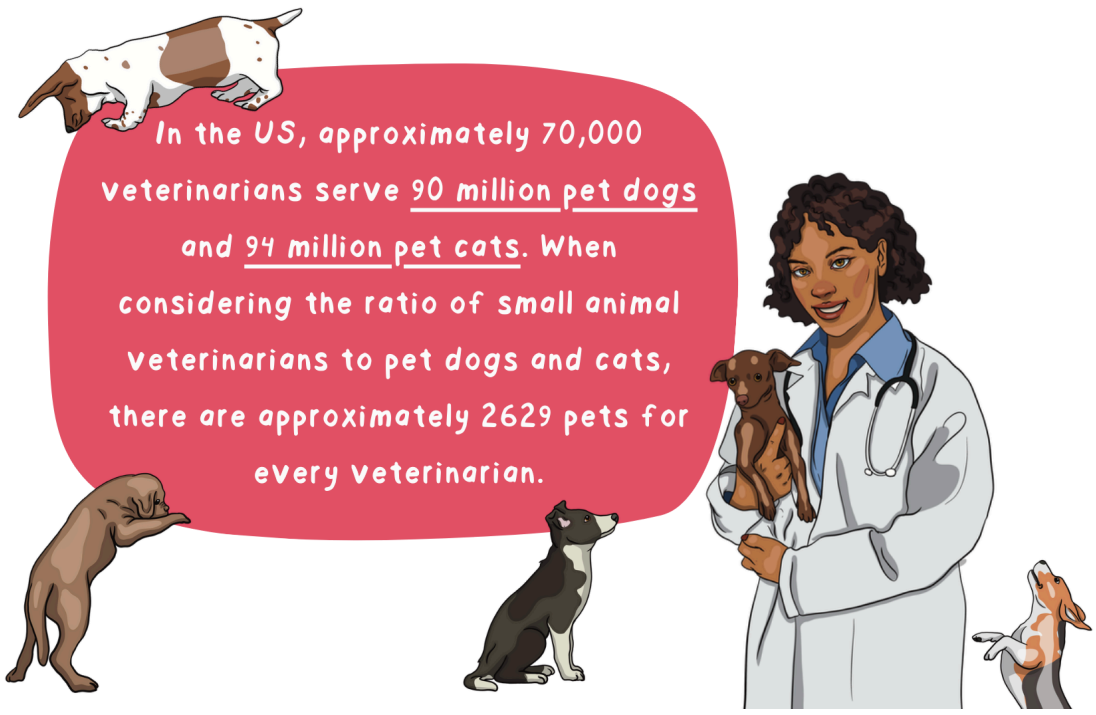
Healing and supporting the gut microbiome in dogs through a whole-food diet involves providing a nutritionally balanced and diverse range of whole foods. A healthy and balanced diet can positively impact the composition and function of the gut microbiome, promoting a thriving community of beneficial bacteria.

Critical components of a whole-food diet to support the gut health of dogs include providing a species-appropriate diet, prebiotics, probiotics, a variety of proteins and other nutrients, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Cancer

It is estimated that one in three dogs will be diagnosed with cancer, and over 50% of dogs over the age of 10 will be diagnosed with cancer. To provide perspective, the number of cancer cases that are diagnosed annually in humans is approximately 1.5 million, while there are 6 million new cases of cancer diagnosed in dogs each year.

A balanced, species-appropriate diet can support the immune system and overall health. Feeding a ketogenic diet consisting of 82% fat, 17% protein, and 1% carbohydrates aids a dog's cells in fighting cancer. Because cancer cells have an altered use of oxygen and a preference for glucose, they cannot metabolize ketone bodies that form when a dog is fed a ketogenic diet. Including herbs, full-spectrum CBD oils, and mushrooms will supply additional antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immune-boosting nutrients.



The Shortage of Veterinarians

In the United States, approximately 70,000 small animal veterinarians serve an estimated 90 million pet dogs and 94 million pet cats. When considering the ratio of small animal veterinarians to pet dogs and cats, there are approximately 2629 pets for every veterinarian. This ratio highlights the significant demand for every veterinarian.

The shortage of veterinarians in the United States is a complex issue influenced by demographic shifts, career preferences, and educational challenges. Recent research highlights several key factors contributing to this shortage.

Demographic changes and career length play a significant role, as the veterinary workforce is predominantly female, with women making up 61.7% of the professionals in the field. Additionally, the mean age at graduation has increased, raising concerns about shorter career spans for veterinarians, potentially resulting in fewer professionals entering and remaining in the field long-term.

Another critical aspect is the need for more veterinarians in rural areas and food animal practices. Lower pay, less appealing working conditions, and the predominantly urban backgrounds of veterinary graduates deter many from entering these fields.
Whole, fresh food diets can play a crucial role in preventing common ailments in dogs by enhancing their immune function, reducing inflammation, and improving overall health. As more dog parents maintain their dogs' health with a proper diet, the burden on practicing veterinarians could lessen.

Maintaining a dog's health is instrumental in minimizing veterinary costs. The examples listed above are just a small sampling of conditions that can be avoided with proper nutrition. Heart disease, kidney disease, pancreatitis, and diabetes have nutritional components. Feeding a dog a natural species-appropriate diet provides his body with the right tools to maintain good overall health.

Takeaway Bites

- Six common veterinary visits, including dental, disease, skin issues, joint pain, obesity, gastrointestinal disorders, and cancer, can be prevented by feeding your dog a species-appropriate diet.
- Feeding the Real Ancestral (6X) Diet™ provides the critical nutrients for disease prevention.
- With the shortage of veterinarians in the United States, maintaining your dog's health with a proper diet will reduce the frustration of locating an available veterinarian when your dog is in crisis.

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