

## Rice is for Sushi, not for Dog Food

### Hill's Prescription Diet k/d now more palatable

Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine k/d® canned formula, the first therapeutic food that led to the founding of Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc., is now even more palatable. Hill's has reportedly improved the Canine k/d canned formula, adding golden flaxseed for high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, as well as rice gluten meal, a source of high-quality protein. According to the company, these changes have improved the palatability with softer texture and a rich, natural color. In-home palatability testing shows that dogs and their owners prefer the new Canine k/d canned to the original formula. The new formula is now available in veterinary clinics.

It's nice that multi-million dollar pet food processing companies are gradually realizing the importance of natural supplements such as flaxseed. We raw feeders have known about them for years. But I have to question whether companies are adding these ingredients for the health benefits or because consumers are doing their homework and are demanding better food for their pets. I believe it is the latter. Otherwise, how does one explain the simultaneous addition of rice gluten meal to this new and "improved" food formula?

Unfortunately for processed pet food companies, dry food filled with sub-standard by-products and inexpensive grain fillers tastes nasty. You can't sell a dog food that dogs won't eat. So they add unhealthy ingredients such as fats and glutens to increase "palatability." It is the gluten with which I take issue here.

Gluten is a collection of proteins found in cereal grains. Humans can develop an intolerance, or allergy, to gluten proteins. This gluten intolerance leads to a surprising number of diseases, some of which are extremely serious and even life-threatening. Examples of conditions known to be associated with gluten allergies in humans are: asthma, eczema, hives, arthritis, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, cerebellar ataxia, diabetes, depression, migraine headaches, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel, lymphoma and gastrointestinal cancers. There is a possibility that gluten allergy contributes to the development of autism, schizophrenia, several autoimmune disorders.

Many of these same conditions appear in our pets and some vets have begun experimenting with gluten-free diets for dogs and cats with symptoms of gluten allergy. The results of switching these animals to a gluten-free diet are quite amazing. John Symes, DVM of Mobile, Alabama, advocates a diet free from gluten grains, dairy, soy, and corn. Dr. Symes has seen drastic results in dogs with chronic allergies and even epilepsy. Switching to a gluten-free diet has caused dogs who previously scratched themselves raw to show no allergic symptoms whatsoever. Dogs that were previously experiencing seizures became seizure-free. W. Jean Dodds, DVM, a well-known expert on the canine immune system and a specialist in canine seizure and thyroid disorders advocates a similar diet, also free of glutens and cereal grains of any kind. She, too, has seen promising results in dogs prone to seizures and other auto-immune disorders.

Dr. Symes is quick to point out that your dog does not have to be suffering to benefit from a gluten-free diet. He recommends that all pets receive a gluten and dairy-free diet. Just because your dog does not display overt symptoms, does not mean that his digestive system is healthy. It could still be compromised and getting worse every day. Eventually, the damage will have been done and by then it may be too late.

A natural, raw diet is ideal for most every dog. If you have serious reservations about feeding raw, then a homemade cooked diet is second-best. The important thing is that you, the owner, the one who knows your pet better than anyone, remain in control of what your pet eats. Don't leave it up to a manufacturing company that makes billions of dollars a year mass-producing sub-quality foods full of ingredients that dogs were never meant to eat. Take control and ensure that your dog is getting a good-quality meat or poultry protein and fresh vegetables in a digestible format (lightly steamed or pulverized). Take control of your pet's diet and get rid of the harmful and unnatural ingredients. It may be the best thing you could ever do for him.

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Pets By Nature