

Vitamins for Pets: Pets need Vitamins Just as Much as You

Whether or not pets need vitamins just as much as you do, and whether or not vitamins for pets are as important to them as they are to you, depends very much on the type of pet to which are referring. Obviously, a stick insect has different needs to a snake, which has different needs to a pet monkey. A pet rock, popular in the 1980s, has few needs. Let's assume we are discussing mammals, and specifically cats and dogs. What are their dietary and vitamin needs? They need vitamins as we do, and also carbohydrates, protein and fats (animal or vegetable) as the basic chemicals for their development. If they have a deficiency in any of these, particularly of vitamins, then they will need a supplement in the same way that we would were we deficient in any vitamin nutrient essential to normal life. That could be the end of this article, but there is more to it than just that. How do pets get these essential nutrients, and how do you assess what supplements are essential for your particular animal? Consider the variety of breeds for example. Were dogs human the difference in weight between the adult weights of a St. Bernard and a Chihuahua of 80 lb and 4 lb would relate to human weights of between, say, 8 stones and 160 stones. That is about 50 Kg and 1000 Kg. How can you possibly discuss these in the same way with respect to dietary requirements? Cats are much closer in size and weight, but these too have different dietary needs than dogs. The term 'pets', then, is meaningless in relation to diet. What is meaningful is the diet required by mammals of different species and different sizes. So what is that diet and how do you know when a vitamin supplement is needed. Good quality food should be sufficient to provide the average animal with a good balanced diet. Commercial pet foods can sometime do this, but not always, in the same way that canned foods cannot always meet all human nutritional needs. Modern pet food producers are getting closer to providing what is needed by different animals at various stages in their life, but unless purchased from specialist outlets, not for specific breeds. One would assume that a bulldog and a small Mexican hairless would have different needs. Many owners feed their pets what they eat themselves, or purchase fresh food specifically for them rather than use proprietary pet foods. When doing this they should be sure that the foods they give are suitable for their pets. For example, cats and dogs need meat, particularly cats that can become seriously ill if fed only a vegetarian diet. Another little known fact is that not all mammals can eat onions, and if cats or dogs are fed onions or onion extract in their meals it could kill them. Never feed cats or dogs onions: it can be fatal. Your pet's diet is part of a general loving care regime, and you should try to find what your cat or dog needs for a happy and healthy life. Included in that is lots of love and attention and proper grooming. Animals like grooming rituals, as is evident when you watch their habits in the wild. If you make the effort to provide the attention to your pets at home that they get from other animals in nature, then they will be much happier and healthy animals. Regular veterinary care is part of that, as is proper preparation for travel; travel that is unnatural to them. Supplements are available from your vet to prepare them for long journeys in a car or boat. Vitamin supplements are also available to make up for any dietary deficiencies. A working dog, a dog recovering from illness or surgery, and a pregnant cat or new mother, all have different nutritional requirements, and a good owner with an interest in their animal will find out what these are. The important supplements for pets are the water soluble vitamins that have to be replaced every day since they can be washed away in urine. What is true for humans is also true of animals in this respect. These vitamins are vitamin C and the B complex vitamins. Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat soluble, and are stored in the body fats until needed. These vitamins can also be stored in the liver, and need less supplementation than the C and B vitamins. Pets require a good supply of minerals, as do humans. These should be taken as a balanced supplement since an imbalance can cause problems in pets. Zinc, for example, can deplete the body of copper if taken in excess. Many pet owners believe zinc to be essential to the reproductive system, as it is in humans, and overdose their pets if they are intended to breed. However, excess zinc depletes the copper content of the pet's body and copper is essential for the proper function of the immune system and for the proper formation and maintenance of bones, blood vessels and the development of the nervous system. Multivitamin and mineral supplements are available in forms and flavors that suit both dogs and cats, and are balanced for the particular needs of the animal involved and its current state of health. Your vet is the best person to advise on what is needed, and the worst thing you could do for your pet, even if done with the best of intentions, is to give them human vitamin and mineral supplements in their food. No matter how much you would like them to be, pets are not human and have different needs. Would you eat mice by choice? If a moth fluttered into your home would you stuff it into your mouth? Of course not. Would you eat unmentionable things off a walkway as your dog does? Of course not. Do not, therefore, apply your dietary requirements to your cat or dog. They are similar to a certain extent, in that most mammals' bodies share a similar chemistry, but your digestive systems are different. Give your pets vitamins for pets, not vitamins for humans. If you care for your pets lovingly, prepare them for stressful times such as travel they are not familiar with, keep them warm and safe at home and provide them with the nutritional supplements that your vet deems right for them, then you will be doing your best to give them a happy life and will be caring for them as you should. Pets need vitamins just as you do.

About the Author

For more information on cat and dog supplements visit: <http://vitametonline.com/> where a large selection of vitamins, herbs, and [anxiety formulas](#) for cats and dogs are available.