

Healthy People, Healthy Dogs

A recent survey suggests that people care as much about their dogs' health habits as they do their own.

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According to a 2007 survey of 1,000 adult Americans by Nestle Purina Pet Care, 90 percent of pet owners said they purchase foods with the most health benefits for themselves and 82 percent look for foods with the most wholesome ingredients to feed their dogs or cats.

The survey points to similar ingredients that pet owners demand in their own foods as well as their pet's food. Examples included:

Protein: While 83 percent of dog or cat owners purchase high-quality protein-rich foods for themselves, 91 percent rank it as the most important nutrient in their dog or cat food.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: More than 80 percent of dog and cat owners believe omega-3 fatty acids are one of the most essential nutrients to have in the food they and their pets eat.

Antioxidants: Ninety percent of the dog and cat owners surveyed always look for foods rich in antioxidants for themselves and their families. The same number of dog and cat owners (90 percent) said they also want to serve their pets foods rich in antioxidants.

Vitamin A: This vitamin helps maintain healthy eyes and good vision for humans and animals. Seventy-nine percent said vitamin A is important in their food and 74 percent said it was important in their pets' food as well.

Wholesome Grains: Sixty-eight percent of survey participants wanted highly-digestible sources of carbohydrates for energy such as brown and wild rice and oatmeal.

Fruits and Vegetables: More than half of those surveyed find fruits and vegetables important in their pet's food.

Natural Ingredients: More than 75 percent of respondents consider natural ingredients to be important and more than 65 percent search for natural ingredients in pet food. And when it comes time to make a purchasing decision, most respondents (31 percent) said natural ingredients dictate what they buy for their families and 38 percent said the same for the food they buy their dogs or cats.