

## ***FAQ (commonly asked questions about Vegepet™ products)***

### **Do veterinarians recommended your products?**

British trained veterinarian David H. Jaggard reviewed *Vegetarian Cats & Dogs* by James A. Peden documenting the research that resulted in Vegepet™ products. He stated:

*Vegetarian Cats & Dogs is a solid work of ethical integrity and is meritorious as an example of applying scientific information to progressive ends. The scientific rationale is as sound as the moral arguments are incisive and persuasive. The author is sincere in his commitment to a scientifically sound means to feed dogs and cats with superior nourishment (meeting all the known nutritional requirements for different stages of life), while at the same time reducing large scale animal suffering in agribusiness.*

Michael Lemmon, DVM stated:

*As a veterinarian being concerned with the animal's health, it is very encouraging to observe their health improving in many cases after being on the new regimen.*

Andrew Knight, veterinarian, BSc., CertAW, MRCVS stated:

### ***Hazards posed by meat-based diets***

*The health hazards of commercial meat-based pet foods are extensive, and difficult to avoid. They may include slaughterhouse waste products; 4-D meat (from dead, dying, diseased or disabled animals); old or spoiled supermarket meat; large numbers of rendered dogs and cats from animal shelters; old restaurant grease, complete with high concentrations of dangerous free radicals and trans fatty acids; damaged or spoiled fish, complete with dangerous levels of mercury, PCBs and other toxins; pathogenic bacteria, protozoa, viruses, fungi and prions, and their associated endotoxins and mycotoxins; hormone and antibiotic residues; and dangerous preservatives. The combined results are rendered so delicious to cats and dogs by the addition of 'digest' - a soup of partially dissolved chicken entrails - that more than 95% of companion animals subsist primarily on commercial meat-based diets.*

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*Unsurprisingly, diseases described in the scientific literature following long-term maintenance of cats and dogs on commercial meat-based diets include kidney, liver, heart, neurologic, eye, musculoskeletal and skin diseases, bleeding disorders, birth defects, immunocompromisation and infectious diseases. As a practicing veterinarian I agree that so-called degenerative diseases such as cancer, kidney, liver and heart failure are far more common than they should be, and that many are likely to be exacerbated or directly caused by the numerous hazardous ingredients of commercial meat-based cat and dog diets.*

### ***Vegetarian diets: a healthy alternative***

*On the other hand, studies and numerous case reports have shown that nutritionally sound vegetarian companion animal diets appear to be associated with the following health benefits: increased overall health and vitality, decreased incidences of cancer, infections, hypothyroidism, ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, lice and mites), improved coat condition, allergy control, weight control, arthritis regression, diabetes regression and cataract resolution.*

**Click on Dr. Knight's link (below) to visit his very informative website**



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### **Should I supplement my dogs' diets with l-carnitine to prevent DCM (dilated cardiomyopathy)?**

In 1988, some scientists speculated that dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs may be related to a deficiency of carnitine, a water soluble amino acid like substance found in animal tissues. DCM causes flabby heart tissue, and a cardiac output insufficient to meet the body's needs.

Paul Pion, who first discovered the taurine/cardiomyopathy link for cats, stated at the time that: "The evidence is not at all strong enough to prove a cause/effect relationship. Most dogs that we treat for dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) with carnitine have NOT responded. It is expensive to treat with carnitine — there is NO reason why owners should go running out to buy carnitine at this time."

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AAFCO's Canine Nutrition Expert Subcommittee currently doesn't consider it a dietary requirement. To our knowledge, no pet food manufacturer includes it in significant quantities in their formulations.

Out of 1000 dogs, 5.5 (mostly purebred) are born with congenital heart conditions. The list of heart diseases another 107.2 dogs will acquire reads like this: heartworms, pericardial, myocardial, and chronic valvular. Some breeds are more at risk for DCM than.

Dogs fed commercial meat based commercial diets are just as much at risk as dogs fed vegetarian diets. Even though carnitine is found in animal tissue, modern processing by pet food companies washes out this highly soluble amino acid, so little if any remains in the final diet.

PETA librarian Karen Porreca, dedicated to keeping up with developments in this unfolding field, shared an interoffice memo with us that she distributed to her coworkers (12/07/94). In it she summarized her research (after talking with Dr. Bruce Keene, at North Carolina State University).

1 — Deficiencies in both taurine and carnitine are highly correlated with dilated cardiomyopathy.

2 — There is evidence that long-term carnitine and taurine deficiency can cause less severe problems, such as an impaired immune system.

3 — Dogs lack the mechanism that herbivores have for storing taurine and carnitine. The amino acids leak out of their kidneys.

4 — Some dogs get DCM from taurine deficiency, and others from carnitine deficiency. If a cure works, some may recover from massive dosages of taurine, and others from massive dosages of carnitine.

5 — Dogs most prone to DCM are: Dobermans, cocker spaniels, boxers, golden retrievers, and any large or giant breed. This list is not inclusive. Karen knows of other breeds having it: malamute, pit bull, Irish setter, and Dalmatian.

6 — Karen recommended supplementation with both taurine and carnitine. Dosage is about 250 mg of taurine per day for taurine (for a 30-40 pound dog), and slightly more for carnitine.

Dogs are scavengers, and normally would eat entire raw carcasses filled with these amino acids. Few dogs are fed that way anymore.

Dr. Mark Kittleson, Professor of Medicine at UC, Davis, wrote us that he has seen an increased incidence of taurine deficiency DCM in American cocker spaniels. Even so, he estimated occurrences at less than 1%.

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Personally, we don't supplement our dogs' diet with L-carnitine since it hasn't been proven to prevent heart problems. If it was so simple as to just adding it would prevent DCM, especially among doberman pinchers who have an extremely high rate of DCM, you can be sure research to prevent it would have focussed on carnitine, but surprisingly a high blood plasma content of carnitine doesn't transmit into a high heart tissue carnitine content.

You can readily order L-carnitine online. Swanson Vitamins sells a superior form called acetyl-L-carnitine for \$19.99 per 90 750mg capsules made by NOW Foods. It is difficult to mix into a large amount of VegeDog™ supplement since it readily absorbs moisture from the air which would shorten the shelf life of VegeDog™. [Click here to order direct from Swanson Vitamins.](#)

L-carnitine is a helpful supplement to help transport fatty acid into the cells. It, combined with alpha lipoic acid, can literally rejuvenate mitochondria in old animals according to Dr. Lester Packer, director of the Packer Laboratory at University of California at Berkeley. Alpha lipoic acid is the most important antioxidant since it enhances (recycles) other antioxidants such as E and C.

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director of the Packer Lab, University of California at Berkeley. Alpha antioxidants such as E and C. diet.

### **Do you offer samples?**

We don't offer samples. Basically the suggested recipes utilize "people food" mostly from ingredients that you are probably familiar with already. Check out [recipes](#) in the instructions. You can download the instructions with recipes and prepare them, even without the addition of the supplement. The supplement doesn't really add much taste to the product, although cats usually like the fishy flavor (from seaweed) in Vegecat™. *When I make the Garbanzo recipe (the favorite around here) I sometimes end up eating some of it myself and I can't even tell the supplement is in it.*

### **Cats need dietary taurine. How is it made?**

Taurine was first isolated from ox bile in 1827. It is also found concentrated in shark blood, mussels, and oysters. In 1918, taurine came from the large muscle of abalone. Inorganic synthesis of taurine from 2-n bromoethanesulfonate dates back to 1930. Since 1947 the most economical method of obtaining taurine is synthesis by sodium sulfite sulfonation of ethylene chloride, followed by ammonolysis with anhydrous ammonia, or with aqueous ammonia and ammonium carbonate.

More precisely, the method is as follows:

Using the Haber-Bosch process, ammonia is directly synthesized from the hydrogen and nitrogen in air. This process uses

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iron as a catalyst along with high-pressure and moderately high temperature. From this ammonia the hydrogen atom of the ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) is replaced with a hydroxyethyl radical (-CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>OH).. This is done by the reaction of ammonia with ethylene oxide and the resulting mixture is separated by fractional distillation. This results in ethanol amine. Further chemical reactions result in ethyleneimine which then results in crude taurine. This is added to water and filtered through activated carbon several times, resulting a purified taurine which is then dried. This method describes the process from which we obtain taurine for use in Vegepet™ products.

Cat food manufacturers use synthetic taurine in their products for economic reasons. Taurine can also be obtained through synthesis by sodium sulfite sulfonation of ethylene chloride followed by ammonolysis with anhydr NH<sub>3</sub> or with aq. NH<sub>3</sub> and ammonium carbonate.

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### **Is it normal for kittens to show enthusiasm for their new Vegepet™ food?**

*A client wrote: is it normal for a kitten to show such enthusiasm for its food? ...have noticed that they're going totally crazy since I've switched to Vegekit™. When I'm about to give them breakfast they rush to their bowls like they have not seen food in weeks! One of them, Emily, has never meowed and now she cries like crazy.*

We wish it *was* normal for kittens to show such enthusiasm for their new food. Count your lucky stars! You are fortunate in having easy to convert cats who have not developed a "food fixation" on commercial food. Commercial cat and dog foods contain "digest." Digest is a disgusting slurry of animal parts that have fermented in a huge vat and then added to pet foods to enhance palatability.

We often get letters stating that their animals had never showed such enthusiasm for their food until eating the Vegepet™ diet. However, sometimes we get letters stating just the opposite, but enthusiasm is what we like to hear.

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### **What is the shelf life for your products?**

Two years is the shelf life for our products, and is dated on the bottom of each of our products. Prozyme® Plus is not dated since enzymes can last a much longer time if kept dry and not heated.

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### **Why is veggie food ok for cats since they eat meat out in the wild?**

If it wasn't for scientific research it wouldn't be possible to even consider vegetarian cats. Thankfully we now know what nutrients are necessary for cats to thrive on and can obtain those nutrients without killing animals. Taurine is a good example. This is a vital amino acid that almost all mammals synthesize from other amino acids, but cats lost that ability

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thousands of years ago (lacking the necessary enzyme). Taurine is now available in synthesized form from non animal sources and works as well as that from animal flesh (even better since it is directly utilized without needing digestion). One particular nutrient is a fatty acid that is extremely rare in the vegetable kingdom but necessary for cats, that obtain it from flesh. That fatty acid we found is a seaweed which is a primary ingredient in Vegecat.

We've been manufacturing Vegecat since 1986 and many of our clients from the early years have stayed with us as their cats aged and even got new cats (since cats don't live forever). Not all cats immediately take to the new diet, and often it is necessary to make a lengthy transition from the old food to the new by mixing a little of the new gradually into the old food. That is usually the most successful way to make the transition.

Why to do it? It certainly is nice to be free from animal products and the hidden cruelty that they represent. It's nice to know that there is an alternative.

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### **What to do for a diabetic cat that can't walk**

A client, Prad, contributing the following information, which resulting in us switching to the form of B12 known as methylcobalamin in our Vegepet™ formulations.

Look for the following symptoms:

- Weak hind legs
- Feet slipping out from under him/her on the floor
- Walking down on the hocks in back and/or on the wrists in front
- Lying down more frequently, especially after short walks

If your diabetic cat does have these symptoms, he or she probably has neuropathy. If your cat is NOT diabetic, these symptoms are a sign of something else, and you should see your vet right away.

The symptoms of diabetic neuropathy are often slight at first. But occasionally, diabetic neuropathy can flare up suddenly and affect specific nerves having a drastic impact. This is what happened to Jasper.

We'd noticed Jasper lying down every four or five feet on the way to his food dish, and once he got there he'd guzzle water like it was going out of style. This progressed to walking down on his hocks, at which point we took him to the vet. They had no idea what was causing this. One vet in our local practice said, "He's too FAT! Get him on a diet, and he'll be fine!".

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We demanded blood work, and low and behold — Jasper was diabetic.

While a medical doctor naturally expects their diabetic patients to suffer from some form of neuropathy, veterinarians are often times clueless — as the previous comment indicates.

We began treating Jasper's diabetes, but the neuropathy progressed to the point where Jasper could not walk at all. Our vets were out of their depth, and helpless to offer a reasonable explanation. The good thing was, our primary vet had no problem admitting this was the first major case of feline diabetes he'd ever dealt with, and that he had no previous experience with diabetic neuropathy. He had no qualms about the research we did, and was eager to hear about it. He was encouraging, thoughtful, and caring — a real God-send.

### **Is there a treatment?**

Yes, we found one. METHYLCOBALAMIN, a form of vitamin B12, has shown great benefit to both cats and people with diabetic neuropathy and other neuromuscular diseases. Unlike regular B12 (cyanocobalamin), METHYLCOBALAMIN is active in spinal fluid. Because of this, it is able to help heal the damaged nerve cells and restore the signal between the brain and your cat's weakened muscles. It is a very safe vitamin (it's water-soluble — meaning your pet pees out what isn't used — and studies have shown no side effects, even at very high doses).

Just 2 days after starting the methylcobalamin, Jasper stood up on his own. This was amazing, considering that he was unable to move at all before starting the vitamin. Within a week, Jasper went from being paralyzed — from his ribs to his back toes — to standing and walking. His recovery was complete after a few more months, and we were thrilled to see him walking, running, and jumping again, just as he had before he got sick.

### **What is the prognosis?**

The prognosis for diabetic neuropathy depends largely on how well the underlying condition of diabetes is handled. Before you do anything else, get the diabetes under control. Treating diabetes may halt progression and improve symptoms of the neuropathy, but recovery can still be slow. So, be patient.

### **What research is being done?**

Much research concerning METHYLCOBALAMIN and diabetic neuropathy has been done worldwide. Read it for yourself. Please note that we are NOT veterinarians, and strongly suggest you contact a knowledgeable veterinarian with any questions on the health of your pets. This site contains information based solely on our personal experience and research.

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We can say this: within a very short time, Jasper's legs and overall weakness were cured, and we based everything we tried on the peer-reviewed research we discovered in various medical journals.

Here is a listing of the articles we found most useful:

Ide H, Fujiya S, Asanuma Y, Tsuji M, Sakai H, Agishi Y.

"Clinical usefulness of intrathecal injection of Methylcobalamin in patients with diabetic neuropathy"

Clinical Therapeutics (1987) 9(2):183-92 Complete article

Yaqub BA, Siddique A, Sulimani R.

"Effects of methylcobalamin on diabetic neuropathy."

Clinical Neurology and Neurosurgery (1992) 94(2):105-11.

Kuwabara S, Nakazawa R, Azuma N, Suzuki M, Miyajima K, Fukutake T, Hattori T.

"Intravenous methylcobalamin treatment for uremic and diabetic neuropathy in chronic hemodialysis patients."

Internal Medicine (1999) June;38(6):472-5.

### **Dosage**

Jasper, who weighed 14 lbs., received 3 milligrams of methylcobalamin daily. The tablets are "sublingual" (to be dissolved under the tongue), but as cats aren't likely to cooperate with that, they can be given like any other pill. If your cat weighs 10 lbs. or more, we'd suggest starting with a 3 milligram dose. Smaller cats can start with half of that, or 1.5 milligrams.

### **Micrograms vs. Milligrams**

If dosage abbreviations drive you nuts, understand that mcg = micrograms and MG = milligrams. So, 1000 mcg is the same as 1 MG. Some bottles of methylcobalamin list the dose in micrograms rather than milligrams, and this confuses people.

If your cat's blood sugar is regulated (under 300 all the time), you should see results within 2 weeks or so. If you don't, increase the dose — some cats are on as much as 10 MG per day with no side effects whatsoever. It's important to remember that all cats are different — Jasper responded quickly, but some cats take longer and require more of the

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vitamin. Be patient, and don't give up!

Jasper was totally limp and helpless, and we're sure a lot of people thought we should have put him to sleep. Thank God we didn't, because the methylcobalamin gave him back his strength and independence.

**Note from Harbingers:**

Methylcobalamin is not expensive and it may be worth a try to see if your cat can benefit from it. The dose that is in the new formulations of Vegepet products is not a big dose, certainly not enough to be therapeutic. Most (if not all) pet food companies don't use methylcobalamin, but the more common cobalamin form of B12.

All that said, a visit to a vet still may be your best bet.

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**My dog/cat seems to be allergic to yeast. What can I do?**

If your companion animal is allergic to yeast (which supplies B vitamins) you could delete the yeast in the recipes and substitute a B-complex tablet. Crush a tablet and mix in with the food. One 50 mg B-complex tablet would suffice for a week's worth of food. Any excess B vitamins are eliminated through the urine since the B vitamins are water soluble.

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**What do you recommend for a cat with renal failure?**

We're hesitant to market a renal failure product. It seems that monitoring the blood work and adjusting nutrient intake accordingly is the safest method for longevity. We'd hoped that just a low protein, phosphorus, and sodium diet would suffice, but potassium should be monitored. At this point its best to leave that to veterinarians. It would be nice to find veterinarians that would formulate vegetarian diets.

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**How is VegeYeast made?**

Pure strains of saccaromyces cerevisiae are grown on mixtures of cane and beet molasses to make VegeYeast. Yeasts are single-celled fungi. As fungi, they are related to the other fungi that people are more familiar with, including: edible mushrooms, common baker's yeast, molds that ripen blue cheese, and molds that produce antibiotics for medical and veterinary use. Yeasts are as natural as fruits and vegetables.

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**How often should kittens be fed?**

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Depending upon your work schedule, kittens could be fed on demand (many times per day). They have little stomachs and are growing rapidly so eating often is their way of survival. Often, feeding like that isn't possible, so feed them semi-moist food when you're home and leave down dry food when you're gone.

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### **How to make the transition to the new food easy**

*A client wrote, I am a vegan and would like my cat, Eliot, to be a vegan, but I am not sure he feels the same. I recently had a test... that indicated that he was getting too much salt and meat in his diet. I was thinking of giving him both kinds (semi-moist and dry) of cat food. Do you have any suggestions on how to introduce a cat to vegetarian food?*

The way to introduce the new diet is to go very slowly, starting with the morning breakfast when hunger is most present (after not eating during the night).

Mix a very little of the new food thoroughly into the old food (best on the wet foods). Let your cat guide you as to how fast he will adapt to the new diet. Some take to the new diet instantly but others take a much longer period of time. Finicky cats are the most difficult to transition, but they can be unpredictable.

Cutting back on the salt intake is easily done when you make the food yourself.

Vegecat supplement contains a large proportion of Norwegian kelp and cats like that fishy odor.

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### **Are your products non-gmo (genetically modified organisms) or reprocessed by-products from other food manufacturing processes?**

We don't use any ingredients that are GMO or are byproducts of other food manufacturing processes. We start with vitamins and minerals that are primary ingredients. The bulk of the food is supplied by you, the consumer, and is made into meals suggested by our recipes for your companion animals.

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### **What if my dogs and cats are currently on a diet of raw meat and vegetables. Isn't it better to feed all raw food?**

We suggest cooked vegetarian food. That is to meet their nutrient requirements published by AAFCO (American Association of Feed Control Officials). Because the bulk of their food is cooked it is important (for best results) to add digestive enzymes. As you probably know, cooking destroys the enzymes (which consider the life force). The enzymes we recommend and stock are Prozyme Plus. It is a vegan tasteless powder added in small amounts right before feeding.

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To meet protein requirements we use legumes. If legumes are sprouted, rather than cooked, the protein content decreases and they are more vegetable like.

All that being said, it is good to add raw food when you can. My dogs enjoy the smoothies that I make in the blender with mixed fruits and veggies. The cats pretty much keep to the garbanzo recipe, with added cooked squash and sprinkled nutritional yeast. Everything is always sprinkled with the enzyme powder.

The supplements fill in the gaps for their nutrient needs. As carnivores (and in the case of the dog, a scavenger) they would eat the entire prey (minus the entrails). They also nibble on grass. Adding Vegecat or VegeDog supplies the nutrients that are still missing on the best vegetarian diet we could come up with. Most of the nutrients do come from the food that you would supply from your local food supplier.

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### **Can companion animals digest carbohydrates like brown rice?**

Not all carbohydrates can be digested, but one important carbohydrate that is digestible is starch such as that in rice. The digestion of starch begins in the mouth. Saliva contains the enzyme amylase, which breaks starch into the complex sugar maltose. Later on, in the small intestine, amylase is released from the pancreas and finishes off the digestion.

Cats and dogs have very short digestive systems, and they don't chew their food well. Both facts work against thorough digestion and much of the food is excreted without absorption. That is why we recommend the addition of digestive enzymes to each meal fed your feline companion. Prozyme Plus (which we carry) has a long track record of aiding digestion in all species of animals. Veterinarians are enthusiastic in their praise for adding Prozyme enzymes because thorough digestion of food eliminates many problems that seem unrelated to diet. For example, undigested proteins have been implicated in a whole range of diseases.

Prozyme® Plus contains the concentrated enzymes *aspergillus oryzae* (alpha-amylase), *aspergillus niger* (lipase & cellulase), and bromelain derived from *ananas comosus* (protease) which are dehydrated fermentation products all in a base of rice starch. It is a vegan formulation and easy to use. There is no taste and because it is so concentrated it takes just a sprinkling over the food for it to do its job. We just shake it on and slightly stir the food just before serving. I use it myself whenever I eat cooked food. Raw food has enzymes intact so it doesn't need supplementary enzymes.

Another advantage to supplemental enzymes is that it spares the body having to produce the enzymes that were lost in cooking. Our bodies manufacture thousands of enzymes (which are special proteins) but as we age the capacity to produce enzymes decreases. Enzymes are sometimes called the "life force" since older organisms contain greatly decreased enzymes. However, with supplemental enzymes added to food, the capacity to have high levels of enzymes (for all the other life functions) is maintained and youthfulness is prolonged. There are many books on this subject which go into details which you may find interesting. The books by Dr. Edward Howell are particularly interesting since he did so much original research in this field.

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### **How do I use textured soy or vegetable protein (TVP)?**

Many of the Vegepet™ recipes have TVP as a listed possible ingredient. Textured soy protein is about 50% protein and nutritionally equivalent to animal protein. It comes in chunks and granules. Chunks are fine for larger dogs but not for cats. The smaller granules are better for small animals.

TVP in our recipes are always measured in the dry state. After measuring the amount (dry) it must then be reconstituted by adding a equivalent amount of water (hot works best). Any extra water that isn't absorbed can be drained off.

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