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## Grain-Free Diets

*There are a lot of different foods to choose from in pet stores, with lots of different brands offering a multitude of different flavors and ingredients. One big trend is grain-free pet foods. While it may sound intriguing, these diets may actually be harmful to your pets. Read on to learn of the potential dangers of grain-free diets.*

## FDA Investigation

In July, 2018, the FDA started investigating cases of heart disease that were linked to eating grain-free diets. The diets that were being studied in particular included foods where the main ingredients included lentils, peas, legumes, and potatoes. They had noted that certain dogs that were previously not pre-disposed to a particular type of heart disease were beginning to contract heart disease. The type of heart disease reported is called DCM, or dilated cardiomyopathy, where the walls of the heart begin to thin. When the walls of the heart thin, the heart cannot pump blood as efficiently, leading to a failure of the valves to pump blood to the rest of the body.

In June 2019, the FDA issued a second statement, declaring that grain-free diets in combination with other factors can cause an increased risk of DCM. Furthermore, the FDA is studying a specific protein (taurine) that seems to be low in certain dogs with food-related DCM. The research showed a large increase in the number of DCM cases reported to the FDA, mainly in dogs, with a large jump noted starting in 2018. For dogs with early DCM induced by grain-free diets, it was noted that switching to a diet with grains did reverse the disease process in many pets.

The research is still pending, and there are still a lot of unanswered questions. However, what is currently recommended is that unless there is a clinical reason for your pet to be on a grain-free diet (food allergy, etc.), then a diet with grains should be fed to your pets to prevent potential heart disease.

*Best Regards,*

*Rachel Rielinger, DVM*



**Animal Hospital  
of Meadville**

**10696 Mercer Pike  
Meadville PA 16335  
814-333-1313**