

the low-down on Grain-Free Diets

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Recently, veterinary cardiologists have been able to establish a link between a heart condition called Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) and boutique, grain-free and exotic (BEG) pet foods. Veterinary nutritionists, cardiologists and the FDA are working to figure out just what it is about these diets that are leading to disease but there is still more research to be done. There is some evidence that these diets can contribute to taurine deficiency which has been documented to cause heart disease in cats.

What is grain-free and why:

Grain-free diets do not contain traditional pet food ingredients such as wheat, oatmeal, rice and corn. Other carbohydrates are used in place of these grains such as potatoes, peas and lentils. This trend likely started as a marketing ploy to satisfy owner demands but allergies to grain in our companion pets are incredibly rare. It is a misconception that grain is used as filler, considering they provide important protein, vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids and fiber to pet food.

What now:

Until we know more, it is recommended that pet owners gradually switch their pets over to a diet that includes traditional grain. Any diet transition should be performed over 1-2 weeks to avoid gastrointestinal upset. Pet owners are urged to choose a pet food brand that performs extensive research into how their diets are utilized in our companion animals and are verified with an AAFCO statement. Any additional questions or concerns should be discussed with your veterinarian.