



Ingredients in Pet Food

GRAINS ARE A RICH SOURCE OF NUTRIENTS FOR PETS

While there is a belief that grains are only used as "fillers" or may be a cause of food allergies, grains are in fact a valuable source of nutrients in pet food.



Key Messages

- Grains are the seeds of cereal grasses and include corn, wheat, oats, rice, barley, rye and others.
- Grains are primarily used in pet food as a source of digestible carbohydrates that provide glucose, the most important energy source for all cells in the body. Grains also contribute nutrients such as protein, fiber, essential fatty acids, B vitamins and minerals.
- Not all grains contain gluten. Although the gluten found in wheat, barley and rye can trigger an immune response in humans with celiac disease, gluten allergies are extremely rare in dogs and have not been identified in cats. Pets are more likely to be allergic to beef, dairy or chicken than to a grain like wheat or corn.

Additional Resources

Masisi, K., Beta, T., & Moghadasian, M. H. (2016). Antioxidant properties of diverse cereal grains: A review on in vitro and in vivo studies. *Food Chemistry*, 196, 90–97. doi: 10.1016/j.foodchem.2015.09.021

Jaworski, N. W., Laerke, H. N., Knudsen, K. E., & Stein, H. H. (2015). Carbohydrate composition and in vitro digestibility of dry matter and nonstarch polysaccharides in corn, sorghum, and wheat and coproducts from these grains. *Journal of Animal Science*, 93, 1103–1113. doi: 10.2527/jas.2014-8147

Verlinden, A., Hesta, M., Millet, S., & Janssens, G. P. J. (2006). Food allergy in dogs and cats: A review. *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 46, 259–273. doi: 10.1080/10408390591001117

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.