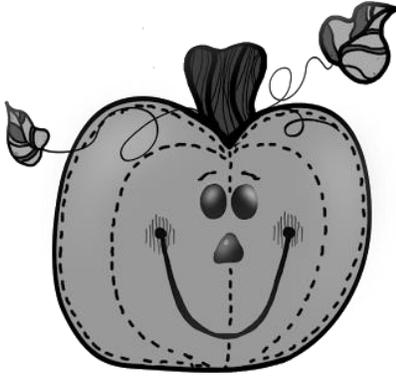


The Benefits of Adding Pumpkin to Your Pet's Diet

by VetDepot on October 7, 2013



For many pets with dietary problems, pumpkin can be a safe, easy and inexpensive solution. The virtues of pumpkin are many, but its main positive attributes are its vitamin A content and its fiber content. Most animals have plenty of vitamin A in their diet, so that is rarely a factor for pumpkin use. However, extra fiber can be beneficial for a variety of reasons.

While it may seem contradictory, fiber can help treat both diarrhea and constipation. For diarrhea, the fiber in pumpkin soaks up extra fluid on its way through the intestinal tract. That helps to firm up stools in a very natural and safe way. It won't totally stop diarrhea caused by an intestinal infection, but it will help you get a handle on the problem while medications go into effect.

For constipation, the added bulk of extra fiber helps to stimulate bowel movements, encouraging your pet's intestinal tract to empty. Again, this is a very natural and safe way to help this problem. Some pets that suffer from chronic constipation do well with a daily dose of pumpkin added to their food.

The extra fiber will also help a dog or cat feel full, even if they're eating fewer calories overall. For this reason, pumpkin can aid in a pet's weight loss program as well. Substituting a tablespoon of canned pumpkin for a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of food will leave your dog still feeling full.

The best way to use pumpkin is to purchase plain canned pumpkin. You don't want the "ready for a pie" version that has added fats and spices. Many pets like plain pumpkin, so you can just add it to their regular pet food. Talk to your veterinarian about how much pumpkin to safely give your pet since it will vary depending on your pet's size and current diet.