

Welcome to Main Street Animal Hospital's seasonal newsletter, your quarterly source for pet health news, updates from around the hospital, savings opportunities, and staff profiles.



Featured Article: Another Update on Grain-Free Dog Foods

In previous newsletters, we discussed research that uncovered a link between certain types of dog food and a particular type of heart disease. Since that time, new reports have been released. This article will provide an update on the situation.

For those that may not have read those previous newsletters, in 2018, veterinary nutritionists and the FDA began investigating a link between grain-free and/or exotic dog food diets and dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). DCM is a type of heart disease in which the heart muscle becomes weakened to the point that it can no longer effectively pump blood, leading eventually to heart failure. Research uncovered that dogs on certain diets seem to be at a higher-than-normal risk for developing the disease. The diets implicated are grain-free, have exotic/unusual ingredients, or are sometimes from smaller, specialty companies. Brands associated with reports of DCM to the FDA are shown in the figure below.

Grain-free diets are not the only ones that have been tied to DCM, but they are often among the most advertised by their companies and are mistakenly perceived by pet owners as better products. Many times, food that is grain-free uses chickpeas, lentils, or similar ingredients as a replacement, and some research may indicate that such substitutes play a role in disease development. In less-common cases, diets low in taurine, a type of simple protein called an amino acid, were also found to increase the risk of DCM.

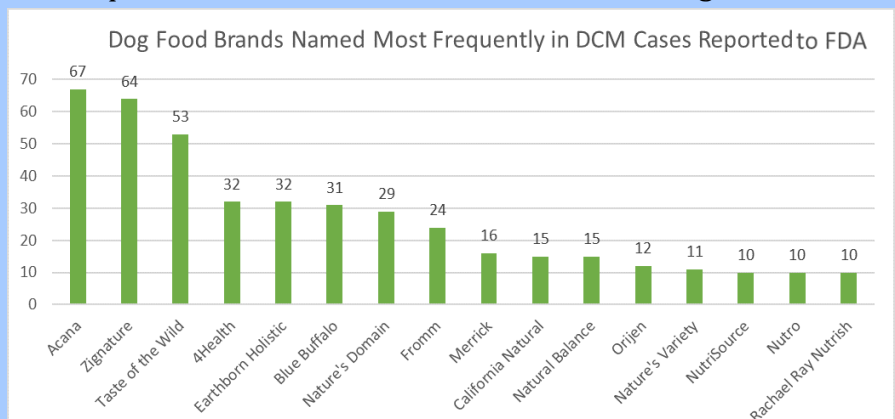


Figure from FDA.gov

Unfortunately, the root cause of these new DCM cases has yet to be determined, but the correlation between these particular diets and the disease is strong enough to warrant caution. Currently, our hospital does not recommend grain-free foods. The process of switching food can itself present some challenges, however, so if you have concerns about your pet's food, reach out to your veterinarian for advice.



Staff Spotlight: Stefanie Russo

Stefanie (Stef) Russo is one of Main Street's certified veterinary technicians and has worked at the hospital since 2007. A graduate of Edinboro University and Manor College, she currently lives in Warminster with her three adopted cats, "Chooch," "Boo," and "Mr. Moo."

