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Can You Guess the First 5 Ingredients in This Popular Veterinary Diet?

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By Dr. Becker

It was just a matter of time before manufacturers of "therapeutic" pet foods realized they were leaving money on the table by not offering a veterinary diet for healthy pets.

These companies have been primarily involved in producing formulas to "treat" specific health conditions in dogs and cats – everything from obesity to kidney failure to old age. Of course, many of these health conditions were created or exacerbated by low quality pet food in the first place – pet food made by the same companies who also produce therapeutic formulas.

But as the subject of nutrition-as-preventive medicine becomes a greater focus in the veterinary community – and as the U.S. pet obesity numbers continue to skyrocket – DVM's can be expected to discuss diet more often with their clients.

The manufacturers of therapeutic pet foods see a huge opportunity to expand their product lines to include veterinary formulas marketed to the owners of healthy pets.

New Veterinary Diets Claim to "Keep Healthy Pets Healthy"

The article in Veterinary Practice News linked below mentions that a well-known manufacturer of therapeutic pet food is launching a new line of veterinary formulas *"designed to keep healthy pets healthy."*

I haven't been able to uncover any information on the ingredients in this new line of foods. However, I was able to easily locate the ingredients in other veterinary formulas made by the same company. Those of you who read here regularly will immediately recognize the very poor quality of these dog foods ...

- The first five ingredients in their dry "dental" diet are rice, chicken meal, corn, brown rice and chicken fat. According to dogfoodanalysis.com: *"Overall, this product appears to be primarily a collection of low quality grain fragments, with precious little meat content."*
- The first five ingredients in their low fat canned food for dogs with GI issues: water sufficient for processing, pork by-products, corn grits, rice flour, powdered cellulose.
- The first five ingredients in their "satiety support" dry dog food: powdered cellulose, chicken meal, corn, wheat gluten, wheat.

I also checked the ingredient lists of a few of their retail (non-veterinary) formulas, and they are very similar in terms of quality. I think we can safely assume the new formulas "designed to keep healthy pets healthy" will be similarly biologically inappropriate.

The fact is, pet foods containing garbage ingredients like most of those mentioned above, will not keep healthy pets healthy. Because they are the *opposite* of species-appropriate nutrition for dogs and cats, they will simply create more ill health and obesity – just like the vast majority of poor quality processed junk pet food on the market today.

Veterinary Junk Diets for Overweight Pets

The Veterinary Practice News article also mentions veterinary formulas and their use with overweight pets:

Therapeutic diets can play a key role in preventing an overweight dog or cat from gaining more weight and also minimize caloric intake, which is frequently the predominant cause of obesity. However, owners have to respect the serious health risks associated with extra weight in order to become dedicated to a new food for their pet.

The article talks about Mabel, a fantastically overweight Beagle who is being fed a prescription diet containing the following allergenic filler ingredients in the first five spots on the list:

- Whole grain corn
- Corn gluten meal
- Chicken by-product meal
- Soybean mill run
- Powdered cellulose

Mabel – who has her own [Facebook](#) page – is also receiving physical therapy and will begin a walking program as soon as she's lost enough weight to be able to move more comfortably.

Poor Mabel. I wish her well on her junk food diet.

Below is a picture one of my Beagle patients, Cal. Cal was a rescue who arrived at his new home obese and depressed (top image). The lower image is Cal today, after his mom switched him to a balanced, species-appropriate [raw food](#) diet. The weight just naturally fell away once Cal started eating the right kinds of real, whole food, and as you can see from the lower photo, his body condition is excellent.

Keeping Healthy Pets Healthy Through Nutrition

Keeping your dog or cat healthy certainly doesn't involve feeding costly, poor quality "therapeutic" food sold by your veterinarian.

It involves feeding wholesome, species-appropriate food that is nutritionally balanced.

Dogs and cats evolved to consume living, unprocessed foods. They have consumed a variety of small prey for thousands of years. Maintaining your pet on a diet of completely cooked and refined foods has a negative impact on her health.

To insure you're offering your pet truly healthy food, you can:

- Prepare [homemade meals for your pet](#) – just make absolutely sure they are well-balanced nutritionally.
- Purchase one or more of the excellent [commercially available](#), nutritionally complete, human-grade raw or dehydrated food for pets.
- You can also feed a combination of homemade meals and commercially prepared diets.

If you're not in a position right now to make the leap to real, whole food for your pet, the next best thing is to [gradually upgrade](#) her diet.

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