



## DRY PET FOOD (KIBBLE) MYTH BUSTING FACTSHEET

All 'complete' pet foods regardless of format, are carefully formulated to provide all the nutrients a healthy pet needs for their species and in many cases a particular life stage.

**Members of UK Pet Food commit to formulating their diets in line with the FEDIAF Nutritional Guidelines which detail the nutritional needs of dogs and cats at varying life stages<sup>a</sup>. In this factsheet we specifically discuss dry pet food (kibble) for dogs and cats to separate out the facts from the myths.**

Dry pet food is one of the most convenient and commonly used forms of dog and cat food. It is popular among pet owners for its ease of storage, longevity, and affordability. Dry food can be made by extrusion, baking, flaking, or using cold-press methods. Dry pet foods have a significantly lower moisture content than wet foods and are therefore fed in smaller quantities.

Commercially prepared complete dry dog and cat food, from reputable manufacturers, come with a reassurance of nutritional adequacy, quality and safety and must deliver all the necessary nutrients for the species, and life stage, they are intended for. Some products also have added ingredients that may benefit dogs or cats overall health and help with the management of certain conditions such as joint, digestive or skin issues.

As for any other format of pet food, which come with their own pros and cons, dry food could have some limitations. For example, overfeeding and lower intake of water in cats and dogs have been associated with feeding dry food when compared to wet food<sup>1</sup>.



### BENEFITS OF COMPLETE DRY DOG AND CAT FOOD

#### 1 Convenient and easy to store

Dry pet food is incredibly convenient as it can be stored without refrigeration and is easy to portion out.

#### 2 Longer Lasting

Dry pet food has an increased stable shelf life due to the reduced moisture content. It is however important to ensure the food is stored correctly following any storage guidance on pack.

#### 3 Lasts throughout the day

Dry pet foods are also good for those pets who like to eat little and often, and who choose to regularly return to the daily portion of their food as it can be left in the dish longer than other types of food<sup>b</sup>.

#### 4 Affordability

Compared to other forms of dog and cat food, dry products are typically more affordable and are often more cost-effective in the long run, making them a budget friendly option for many pet owners. This could be partly due to the raw materials used in dry pet food and their longer shelf life and lower moisture content lowering transport costs.

#### 5 Dental Health

The most effective means of keeping dogs' teeth clean at home is by brushing their teeth regularly. But there are also some products on the market that can support dental and oral health in dogs and cats. These include Dental Health Diets that use special kibble technology to reduce plaque and tartar buildup on the teeth or products that are formulated with certain ingredients/nutrients to support oral care.<sup>c</sup>

#### 6 Feeding Enrichment

Kibble is easy to use and integrate into slow and puzzle feeders. Using these interactive feeders can increase the feeding time and contribute to a pet's mental and physical stimulation and to create feeding enrichment.

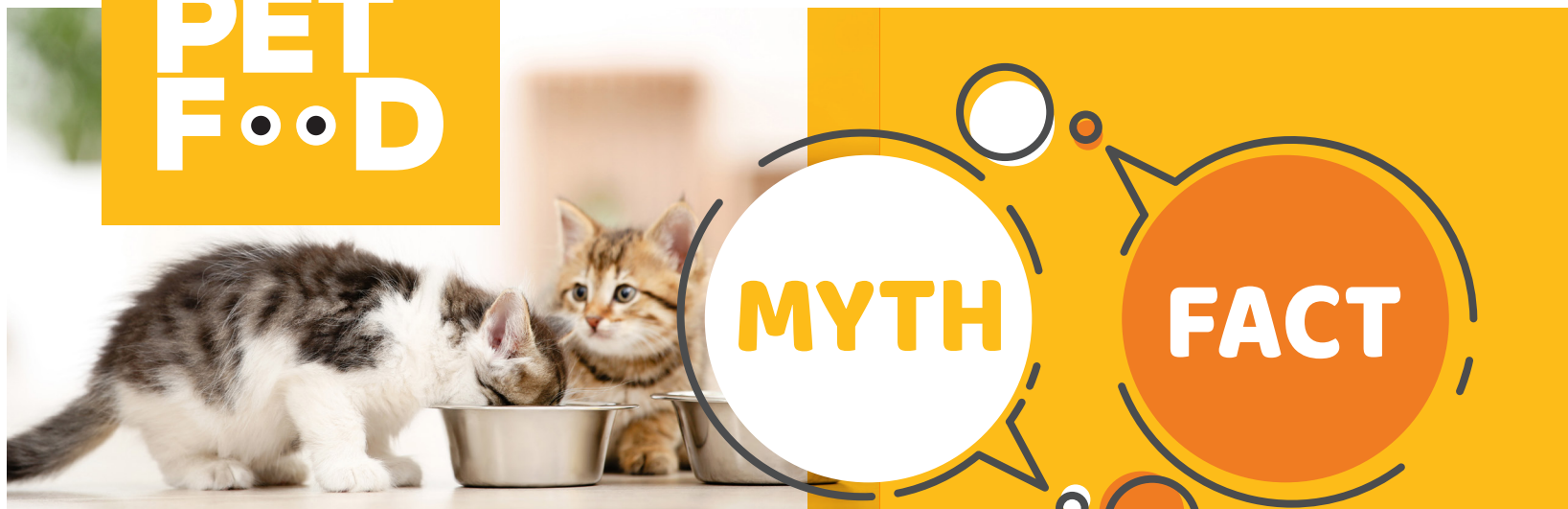
*a. These guidelines are peer reviewed by independent veterinary nutritionists throughout Europe and they are updated to include the latest science.*

*b. Please always follow the feeding guidelines on pack and measure the food using an accurate measuring scale to weigh your pet's daily food portion to avoid overfeeding.*

*c. As always, manufacturers and brands must be able to support their claims if asked.*

*1. Thomas, D.G., Post, M. and Bosch, G., 2017. The effect of changing the moisture levels of dry extruded and wet canned diets on physical activity in cats. Journal of nutritional science, 6, p.e9.*

**MORE ADVICE ON DIETS AND NUTRITION CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.UKPETFOOD.ORG](http://WWW.UKPETFOOD.ORG)**



## SOME OF THE MOST COMMON MYTHS ABOUT DRY PET FOOD

### MYTH 1: ALL DRY PET FOOD IS THE SAME

**FACT:** Not all dry dog or cat food is created equal. Different manufacturers use different types and quality of ingredients to offer added benefits in addition to meeting the basic nutritional requirements of pets. It is important to read the ingredients list, and claims on the product, and choose what is best for your pet<sup>d</sup>.

### MYTH 2: DOGS AND CATS NEED VARIETY IN THEIR FOOD

**FACT:** While animals do enjoy a variety in their diet, it is not necessary to change their food frequently. Sudden changes in diet can upset your pet's stomach and cause digestive issues. It is best to stick to a consistent diet that meets your pet's nutritional needs and give them the occasional appropriate treats. If a change of diet is necessary, this should be done gradually to allow a period of adjustment. This is particularly important for cats that show neophobia (reluctance or avoidance to eat new foods)<sup>2</sup>.

### MYTH 3: DRY FOOD IS NOT AS NUTRITIOUS AS WET FOOD

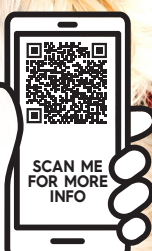
**FACT:** A complete dry food can be just as nutritious as a complete wet food. Many dry food brands offer a complete and balanced diet that meets all of your pet's nutritional needs.

### MYTH 4: COOKING AND PROCESSING KILLS OFF ALL THE NUTRIENTS AND VITAMINS IN A DRY PET FOOD

**FACT:** Heat processing, such as cooking or baking, can cause some loss of vitamins, particularly heat-sensitive vitamins like vitamin C and some B vitamins. However, to ensure a complete diet, pet food manufacturers add the necessary vitamins and minerals to their products to make up for any nutrients that may be lost during processing.

Other factors that can affect the nutrient content of pet food include the quality and freshness of the ingredients used, the processing methods employed, and the storage and handling of the finished product. For more information on proper handling and storage of pet food at home please visit: [www.ukpetfood.org](http://www.ukpetfood.org) > handling pet food at home.

As with any form of pet food, it is important to choose a balanced and complete diet that provides all the essential nutrients that your pet needs to maintain good health and is appropriate for their age, size and activity level. Additionally, it's always a good idea to consult with a veterinarian to determine the best diet for your pet's individual requirements.



SCAN ME FOR MORE INFO

<sup>d</sup> Manufacturers and brands are contactable if you have any questions about their products.

<sup>2</sup> Bradshaw JW. Mere exposure reduces cats' neophobia to unfamiliar food. *Animal behaviour*. 1986 Apr.



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