

Supplements for Pet Wellness - America's Healthy Obsession

“The better I get to know men, the more I find myself loving dogs.”

Charles de Gaulle



Whether it's a dog, a cat, a bird, or an iguana, Americans certainly love their pets. In a 2013 poll of 3,800 pet owners, the majority of pet owning Americans (84%), said they view their pets as "family members." In that same poll, 63% reported that they love their pet more than "at least one other family member." As indicated by the popular phrase, "Man's best friend," the bond that American society has with its companion animals, truly can't

be overstated.

For nearly 30 years, there's been a continuing trend towards understanding wellness as a primary contributing factor in overall health, happiness, and quality of life. It comes as no surprise that in addition to seeking these desired wellness outcomes for ourselves and our (human) loved ones, we've simultaneously been seeking these outcomes with greater frequency, for our pets as well.

Pet Wellness Trends & Statistics

According to AmericanPetProducts.org using data compiled by Neilson, Rakuten Intelligence, and Packaged Facts, Americans spent almost \$96 billion on their pets in 2019. That's a huge number. It's so big in fact, that it's larger than the GDP of more than half of the nations on Earth. That's how much we love our pets. By industry estimates, over the counter medicines and supplements make up more than 10% of that \$96 billion, which includes everything from flea and tick collars, to heartworm-prevention chews. Just the vitamin and supplement portion of the market is estimated, (by Packaged Facts), to be valued at \$2.2 billion annually in the U.S. alone.

Pet supplements are gaining popularity and companies are selling more and more of them with each passing year, so plenty of people obviously feel that those products are worthwhile. Here at FarmersMarketWellness.com, we believe that challenging conventional wisdom often results in gained insight as opposed to time lost. We like to ask the important questions. When it comes to

supplements for pets, we want to know three things: Can they potentially be harmful? Are they actually good for our pets? Are we getting our money's worth? Come check out what we found!

Pet Supplements by Popularity

When it comes to purchasing [pet vitamins and supplements](#), the overwhelming majority of pet wellness obsessed Americans are dog and cat owners, who outnumber owners of other pets by more than 9.1 to 1. This means that out of the estimated \$2.2 billion spent annually on pet supplements, roughly \$2 billion of that money is spent on canine companions and family felines. Because there are far too many types of pets to focus on, we'll give in to the data, and center the remainder of this discussion around supplements sold for dogs and cats.

Insider.com's 2018 list of the most popular pets in America says that Americans own, as pets, 88.3 million cats and 74.8 million dogs. The only pet more abundant than cats and dogs was freshwater fish, of which Americans have 142 million. In our research for this article however, we discovered that when compared with dog and cat owners, not many fish owners are feeding their pets supplements. In case you were wondering though, there actually are numerous pet vitamins and supplements even for fish. That said, nutrients for Nemo didn't rank nearly as high in popularity as glucosamine for Garfield.

Rules of the Game

Pet owners that researched pet supplements are motivated to give their animals the healthiest, happiest, and highest quality of life. With that in mind, there are some very important things to understand.



The first rule is that animals aren't human. All of us have become quite accustomed to hearing our doctors and trusted medical practitioners routinely ask us if we're taking our vitamins. The fact is people eat a variety of different foods multiple times daily. Some of the food we eat is fantastic for us, and gives our bodies a wide assortment of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. On the other hand, humans of the 21st century are

accustomed to wanting things served to them immediately. Unfortunately, this is where the fast food chains are able to win over repeat customers nationwide. Point being, there are very few people who actually ingest all of the nutrients human bodies need on a daily basis through their daily meals. As a result, it's typically considered to be a best practice for adults to take an age appropriate multivitamin each day, to aid in the body's optimum functioning.

Now contrast that with the food and eating habits of our pets. Pets usually eat the same exact food at least one time daily, every single day. Provided you're feeding your pet a decent quality pet food, there shouldn't really be a need for supplements because the food they eat is specifically engineered to meet all of that particular animal's nutritional needs according to many vets. In an interview with PetWebMD, Sherry Sanderson, DVM, PhD at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine said, "There are some circumstances where a pet has an underlying condition that may warrant a supplement, but many supplements are untested and unproven in veterinary medicine. The key point is that most pets consuming a complete and balanced diet probably have a better-balanced diet than most humans."



The 2nd rule is to keep in mind the difference between supplements and nutraceuticals. Think of supplements almost the same way you think of vitamins. You simply take them to make sure you're getting enough of them, without a particular goal or outcome in mind. Nutraceuticals are different. The Pet Food Institute says, "nutraceuticals are intended to treat or prevent a disease and are therefore a drug, not a supplement." The American Veterinary Medical Association defines nutraceutical medicine as "the use of micronutrients, macronutrients, and other nutritional supplements as therapeutic agents." In a certain light, nutraceuticals fall into a category all their own, but should

really be looked at as natural medications designed for a specific purpose.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines dietary supplement as a product taken orally that contains one or more ingredients that are intended to supplement one's diet and are not considered food. When standing alone, the word supplement means something that completes or enhances something else when added to it. If our pet's foods are supposedly giving them all of the nutrients they need, then how do we know if supplements are necessary and safe.

The ABC's, D's, and E's of Safely Giving Supplements to Your Pet

If you have a cat, there are certain vitamins to watch out for in the multivitamins you're considering. Too much calcium or vitamin D can be toxic to cats. Too much vitamin C can cause crystallization of the urine leading to urinary tract blockages, which can be life threatening if left

untreated. Garlic or onion can destroy a cat's red blood cells to the point that the animal would become anemic.

For the dog loving readers, things are equally as concerning. Too much magnesium can impact your pet's circulatory and nervous systems causing weakness, shallow breathing, coma, or death. An excess intake of calcium and phosphorus can cause a myriad of problems in the bone structure of dogs, especially when it comes to larger breeds. Too much vitamin D should also be avoided because high levels of D creates an overabundance of calcium in dogs and wreaks havoc on the kidneys.

At this point the animal lover in you may be questioning things like – should they give their pets supplements, and if they do, how do they do it safely? Considering so many of us think of (and treat) our pets as family members, the most important piece of advice is to do just that – treat them like a family member! What we mean is that you wouldn't take a whole bunch of supplements without first talking with your primary care physician to make sure the supplements were warranted, safe, and that they wouldn't react negatively with any prescription medications you are



taking. That would be foolish and potentially dangerous. Likewise, you shouldn't take that type of action for your companion animals without first speaking with your Veterinarian, to verify the exact same information on behalf of your pets.

The best and safest play is to always consult your Veterinarian. To clarify, we don't want to cause any unnecessary alarm. As a general rule, adding a weight-appropriate daily multivitamin into your pet's wellness regiment shouldn't cause any catastrophic health issues, and could add some additional nutritional value to your pet's routine. Before animals were domesticated and turned into pets, every animal was a wild animal. In the wild, when animals hunt, the leader of the pack is traditionally the first to eat. When observing animals feeding in the wild, once the rest of the pack yields, and lets the leader eat first, the leader will always, 100% of the time, feast on the organs of the prey first,

because organs are incredibly rich in vitamin and nutrient content. Animals simply know to do this instinctively. A few bites of an ox liver likely have the same amount of nutrients as an entire bottle of daily pet multivitamins, and that ox liver certainly doesn't harm the leader of the pack. Having said that, we still strongly advise talking with your pet's veterinarian, and living by the rule, "better safe than sorry" when the health of a family member is on the line.

Do We Give Our Own Pets Any Supplements?

We are thorough in our research as to what we give our pets, and we have seen firsthand, anecdotal evidence of benefits from some of the newer, powdered formulations that have recently hit the market, which you'll typically only find in specialized pet food stores, or you'll have to locate online. There is also a fairly new supplement on the market that has all of the telltale signs of a good, helpful supplement. It has a low risk factor, a high possibility of achieving the desired reward, and seems as though it's going to become a common staple in the world of pet supplements. That product of course, is CBD. Pet owners everywhere, intent on enhancing their pet's quality of life, are trying, and buying CBD products for their animals. While we can't (per FDA regulations) claim that CBD will help diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any illness or disease, we can certainly tell you about our own pets, and the changes that we ourselves witnessed. Additionally, through product reviews and survey results, we can tell you that most of our customers who continually purchase these [CBD pet supplements](#) for their pets, from our direct-to-consumer, retail site, [FarmersMarketWellness.com](#), are doing so with a few specific wellness goals in mind. These pet owners are trying to aid their animals who have separation anxiety, experience the common pains associated with old age or joint issues, aren't as lively as they used to be when the animals were younger, or who experience difficulty eating or sleeping. We may not be allowed to say that CBD helps these animals, and we would never dream of saying such things, but we can tell you that more than 90% of the first-time customers who make these purchases are repeat customers. Since we're only discussing our internal sales trends, you'll need to draw your own conclusions.

The important thing to make note of, is that like all pet supplements, you should always consult your Veterinarian prior to administering CBD. The only other cautionary thought to leave you with is this: [CBD products](#) (for humans or pets) aren't currently being regulated by the government. As a result, there are a huge number of less than credible companies selling what they claim to be CBD, without any accountability for what's actually in the bottle. Therefore, we at [FarmersMarketWellness.com](#) have such stringent vetting practice for all of our suppliers.

We have gone to the source by visiting farms, inspected extraction and manufacturing facilities, met with owners and operators, and tested products for efficacy and safety for all the brands we represent. We take this endeavor so seriously, that we end up rejecting more than 3/4 of the products that want to sell/promote their products on our website because they do not meet our stringent safety and efficacy standards. In closing, we would like to encourage you to do your own research. Even if you don't get your CBD products from [FarmersMarketWellness.com](#), then please make sure that your CBD is coming from an equally trusted source that's intent on protecting the safety of you and your family (including your pets).