



GOING GREEN

Your dog may be trying to tell you something when he goes outside and eats grass. Somehow he innately knows that chlorophyll helps him stay healthier.

By Deva Khalsa VMD

Dogs spend a lot of time eating grass. Have you ever wondered why? Although grass is a green plant that dogs have easy access to, it's used for decorating lawns, not as a food source. Yet all dogs love to eat grass. Do they somehow know that the chlorophyll found in grass has a multitude of important health benefits? But the problem is, dogs can't digest grass well enough to benefit from its chlorophyll. If they could open the fridge, would they pull out a bunch of broccoli or kale instead?

The Health Benefits Of Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll is a green pigment found in just about all plants and algae. It's an extremely important compound in photosynthesis, for it actually allows plants to absorb energy from light.

A marvelous and amazing fact is that the molecular structure of chlorophyll is almost identical to hemoglobin, which is found in red blood cells. Hemoglobin and chlorophyll are identical except for one atom. Hemoglobin is responsible for carrying oxygen to all your dog's organs and cells. The hemoglobin in your dog's blood has iron as the central molecule, while the chlorophyll in plants has magnesium as the central molecule.

When our dogs eat chlorophyll, they're actually helping to build the health of their blood. That's because the chlorophyll will help replenish their red blood cells.

Chlorophyll helps to cleanse all the cells of the body, fight infection, heal wounds, build the immune system and detoxify all systems, particularly the liver and the digestive system. It also

promotes digestive health - which is why many dogs with acute digestive problems tend to go for the grass.

Many of our canine friends can also benefit from chlorophyll's double action in both treating and preventing bad breath. Chlorophyll can eliminate odors in the mouth. It also improves digestion, the most likely cause of bad breath in dogs with healthy teeth and gums.

Chlorophyll can increase oxygen utilization within your pet's body. It also breaks down calcium oxalate stones in the bladder. Importantly, chlorophyll reduces the ability of carcinogens to bind with DNA in the liver and other organs.

A study published in *Carcinogenesis* clearly shows that chlorophyll blocks procarcinogens, such as aflatoxins, that damage DNA. The Linus Pauling Institute's Cancer Chemoprotection Program has indicated that natural chlorophylls in the diet offer cancer protection. Chlorophyll also binds to toxic heavy metals, eliminating them from the body before they cause organ damage such as kidney failure.

Dogs have the right idea when they eat grass, but the sad truth is they do this because they have no other source of fresh green plants. Wild dogs and cats get their chlorophyll from the intestines of their prey. They also have a plethora of healthy wild plants to nibble on.

Most domestic dogs can't open the fridge and take out the spinach, broccoli, asparagus, peas, kale, parsley and beans that



are rich in digestible chlorophyll. The grass they choose as a last resort comes out looking just the way it looked when it went in.

The good news is you can provide your dogs and cats with digestible, healthy and delicious treats containing chlorophyll. One easy way to accomplish this is to cut up some of the green vegetables listed below and sauté them lightly in butter.






You can add lightly sautéed or mulched greens directly to your dog's meal or mix them with banana, yogurt, pumpkin, apple

pieces, kefir etc., and place them in hollowed marrow bones, toys, or even ice cube trays for a yummy frozen treat. But sometimes, just like with kids, you have to sneak greens into your dog's diet. Cheese and eggs are the best means of disguise.

Fresh fruits and vegetables can be an important addition to your dog's diet. They're chock full of healthy phytonutrients and chlorophyll that offer a variety of health benefits for your dog. So now you know that when your dog is grazing in your back yard, it might be time to add some greens to his meals.



Chlorophyll content of some healthy vegetables

-  One cup of spinach 23.7 mg
-  One cup of parsley 38.0 mg
-  One cup of green beans 8.3 mg
-  One cup of sugar peas 4.8 mg
-  One cup of Chinese cabbage 4.1 mg

Green isn't the only color that provides special health benefits for your dog. In fact, there's a rainbow of colorful foods containing an abundance of health benefits. When you feed your dog vegetables, you're also getting the benefit of phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are organic compounds found in plants that help to both prevent and relieve disease and illness. The colors of fruits and vegetables indicate the different varieties of phytonutrients they contain.

Phytonutrients work in different ways and have different functions to help maintain a healthy body. To ensure your dog receives a wide range of different phytonutrients, it's important to add variety within the color groups. Most dogs love broccoli stems and chew them like a bone and they can even eat them raw. Apples and blueberries can also be eaten raw. Carrots aren't digested well in the raw form, so I usually either grate or steam them. 🐾

Colorful Sources of Phytonutrients



Pumpkin
Carrots



Cranberries
Apples



Beets



Blueberries



Broccoli Kale
Dandelion Alfalfa



Since beginning her holistically oriented veterinary practice over 25 years ago, Dr Khalsa has been incorporating homeopathy, acupuncture, Chinese herbs, nutritional advice, allergy elimination techniques such as NAET and also JMT into her approach. Dr Khalsa is a Fellow and Professor of the British Institute of Homeopathy.

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