**Health impacts of feeding a poor diet to your pet**

Many pet owners ask me “Is premium pet food really worth it?” and after over 20 years in general vet practice, I have seen many health problems in both dogs and cats as a result of a poor-quality diet being fed, ranging from mild to life-threatening.

So, my advice to pet parents is to choose a premium diet for their pets that is well-balanced as ultimately this means your dog or cat will lead a life with less health problems and by doing so, you are investing in your pet’s future.

Skin health

Your dog’s skin and coat can be directly affected by the quality of the diet they eat. When dog owners complain that their dog still smells bad even after a bath, after ruling out medical issues, I always ask about their dog’s diet. If they are on a poor-quality, cheap or incomplete diet, one of the first things I advise them to do is to switch to a better-quality diet to better support their skin and coat health. The difference in their skin and coat quality is obvious within weeks of feeding an improved diet and not only that, but their bad odour also disappears. This can result in a much stronger bond with the dog because a healthier, more pleasant-smelling dog gets more cuddles and attention.

Joint health

Joint development can be affected by feeding a poor-quality diet. I recently saw a kitten that had developed rickets due to a being fed a diet insufficient in vital nutrients and minerals including calcium. This meant he couldn’t even walk properly.

Within 2 weeks of feeding a premium diet, he was walking again and continued to develop into a normal healthy kitten once the diet was corrected.

Puppies are also at risk of developing hip and elbow dysplasia if their diet is not balanced properly for growth. Unfortunately, some of the diet-related musculoskeletal problems are irreversible, which is why I recommend to all puppy owners to switch to a premium diet if they are not already on one.

Gastrointestinal health

There is a saying, “what goes in, must come out”! and, if the food you are feeding is poor quality and indigestible, then it is highly likely to smell 100 times worse on the way out, along with severe flatulence. More will also come out, meaning that less is absorbed and put to good use by your pet's body. I’ve found this is most often true for poor-quality tinned food and simply removing this component of a dog’s diet and feeding a premium dog kibble can eliminate the problem of excessive flatulence.

The same can be said about poo frequency and consistency. Do you really want to be picking up multiple sloppy dog poos all day? Feeding a premium diet means the food is more digestible with good quality ingredients so you need to feed less of it to meet your dog’s nutritional requirements.

Simply put, better quality diet = firmer poo.

For more tips on how to get the perfect poo, check out this article.

As a pet owner, you can help maintain your dog or cat’s health by ensuring that you choose a high-quality premium food, rather than the cheapest option.

Cheaper options may appear more economical in the short-term, but could be doing damage to your pet’s health in the long-term.