

# Help! What Should I Feed My Dogs and Cats? Part One

These days, one of the most frequent questions I am asked is, "What should I be feeding my dog or cat friend?" Most likely this is due at least, in part, to all of the pet food recalls and the disturbing information about ingredients and how and where many pet foods are made that came to light as a result. Many of you just want to know what is safe.

I also believe that this question comes up a lot simply because there are so many choices out there. Should I feed dry food or canned? Can I buy the cheaper foods at the grocery store or do I need to buy at the pet store? Can I

buy at the big chain pet stores or do I have to pay higher prices at the smaller specialty pet stores? Maybe I should be home cooking

for my animal friend or maybe I should be feeding a raw food diet. What do you think, Martha?

Before I tell you what I think and how I feed my own animal friends, I want to remind you that I am not a veterinarian and I am not a nutritionist and I hold no degrees or certification in animal nutrition. So, why are you asking me these questions? *Just kidding!* I do have lots of experience in this area and I do have opinions, which I will be happy to share.

I hope most of you know me well enough by now to know that I do not believe in absolutes. Therefore, I do not believe there is just one right way to feed our animals friends, so you can relax. I think what and how you feed your animal are choices that you must make based on what works for you and your animal friend.

Let's talk basics. Generally speaking, the fresher and more "real" the food, the better. In many cases, pet food companies have misled us. It is okay to feed our animal friends "people food" as long as it is good, healthy food as opposed to junk food and unhealthy scraps. That is unless your animal has to be on a restricted diet for health reasons. Even then, it may be better to feed fresh food rather than processed but the help of a good holistic vet or animal nutritionist may be needed to get the ingredients, recipe and proportions best suited to your animal's individual needs.

If you have the time, desire, and money, a home-cooked or raw food diet made with human grade and — whenever possible — organic ingredients, is the very best you

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## Our Animal Friends

by Martha Norwalk

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