

# THERE IS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE LINKING DIETS TO DCM IN ANIMALS.

## FDA STATEMENT ABOUT DCM

In July 2018, the FDA issued a warning stating that certain types of diets may be contributing to nutritional deficiencies in dogs. The cases reported to the FDA were patients who developed taurine deficient DCM. Taurine is an amino acid that dogs are normally able to synthesize from other amino acids in their food. In the same report, the FDA also said the following:

“Based on the information gathered as part of our investigation to date, our advice to pet owners remains consistent. **The agency has not identified specific recommendations about diet changes** for dogs who are not displaying DCM symptoms, but encourages pet owners to consult directly with their veterinarians for their animal’s dietary advice.”

(Cited from: FDA Provides Update on Investigation into Potential Connection Between Certain Diets and Cases of Canine Heart Disease, 2019.)

IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE LINKING DIETS TO DCM IN ANIMALS.

## WHAT CAUSES DCM?

The FDA has stated that the underlying cause of DCM in the reported cases is not known at this time, and the relationship between diet and DCM is only speculative.

Meaning, it’s potentially connected but not proven to be causative at this time. Until the ingredients identified by the FDA report are fully studied, no conclusion can be made about the underlying dietary cause(s) of taurine-deficiency DCM in dogs.

Despite the facts of the FDA investigation, a small number of bloggers and veterinarians have implied without evidence (and contrary to the FDA investigation findings to date) that small pet food companies and/or grain-free brands of foods may potentially be responsible for causing taurine-deficiency DCM in dogs. Their reasoning is that peas and legumes are present in high amounts in foods marketed as “grain-free” despite the fact that many grain-free brands contain meat - an ingredient that is heavy in taurine. What they also leave out is the fact that many grain-free formulas are further supplemented by the addition of extra taurine. The false and misleading narrative by the small number of bloggers and veterinarian’s is being done despite there being no clear evidence showing that a dog food type, brand, or even ingredient is solely responsible for taurine-deficiency DCM in dogs.

## IS DCM A NEW PROBLEM?

The connection between diet and DCM in dogs was first discovered nearly 20 years ago in a paper published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association in 2001. Twelve cases of DCM described in the paper were collected between 1997 and 2001, years before grain-free dog food was ever available on the market.

However, since 2001, the FDA has still not confirmed any link between grain free diets and DCM and has not advised pet parents to make any dietary changes.



## IS DCM CAUSED BY GRAIN-FREE DIET?

The FDA has said there is no connection between a grain free diet and DCM. In fact, the FDA’s most recent position is that DCM is a complex condition. The majority of factors talked about include:

- Long-standing genetic predisposition (largely in golden retrievers)
- Appropriate diet of essential nutrients
- The ability for nutrients to be synthesized by a dog’s physiology

On February 19, 2019, the FDA updated its statement to include:

“The reports include dogs that have eaten... grain containing foods... They also include all forms of diets: kibble, canned, raw and home-cooked. This is why we do not think these cases can be explained simply by whether or not they contain grains, or by brand or manufacturer.”

And also said, “At this time, we are not advising dietary changes based solely on the information we have gathered so far.”



WHAT’S BEST FOR MY DOG?