

GETTING THE FAT ON FATTY ACIDS

(Fish Oil Capsules)

Fatty acids are among the most commonly used nutritional supplements for treating dogs and cats. Fatty acids are types of polyunsaturated fats. Fatty acids that cannot be produced by the body, but must be obtained through the diet, are called essential fatty acids. Cats and dogs differ in what are essential fatty acids.

Medicinal fatty acids are divided into omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. In general, omega-6 fatty acids tend to promote inflammation, whereas omega-3 fatty acids act to reduce inflammation. As such, omega-3 fatty acids are used in diseases in which anti-inflammatory activity is needed. The fatty acids can substitute and/or be used in conjunction with medications such as corticosteroids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories in the treatment of inflammation.



The most commonly used supplements that provide fatty acids are fish oil and flax seed oil. While flax seed oil contains more omega-3's than fish oil, the omega-3's found in flax seed oil are in an inactive form. The omega-3's found in fish oil are in an active form. In research studies, fish oil has shown positive benefits in helping people and pets with disease, whereas flax seed oil has not been as beneficial. For this reason, fish oil is generally recommended as the omega-3 fatty acid supplement of choice.

The active omega-3's (eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)) are derived from fish oils of coldwater fish (salmon, trout, or most commonly menhaden fish.) Also called linseed oil, flaxseed oil is derived from the seeds of the flax plant and has been proposed as a less smelly alternative to fish oil.

Most pet foods contain far more omega-6 fatty acids than omega-3's. Some pet food companies have added omega-3 fatty acids to their foods to lower the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids. It is important to realize that although the ratios may be a guideline, the actual concentration of EPA in the omega-3's is what is most important.

Fish oil supplementation may be helpful for pets with inflammatory diseases including allergies, yeast infections of the skin and ears, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis, kidney disease, heart disease, and cancers. In general, more severe disease requires doses higher than those commonly recommended. It is easy to administer (via gel caps or liquid) and can reduce the amount of other medications needed to treat symptoms.

Dose

In studies done in people and pets, dosages much higher than label doses are needed to achieve results. We use dosages between 80-150mg per kilogram of body weight per day using 500mg to 1000mg/high potency capsules.

For a 10 lb dog: 500mg once daily

For a 20 lb dog: 1000mg once daily

For a 30 lb dog: 1000mg twice daily

For a 60 lb dog: 2000mg twice daily.

For a 90 lb dog: 3000mg twice daily



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