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A Mountain Dog Publication

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It is believed that some species of animals (dogs and cats included) cannot convert linolenic acid to the other essential omega-3 fatty acids – EPA and DHA. For this reason dogs and cats should also be supplemented with an oil that contains EPA and DHA; versus one that supplies omega-3 fatty acids solely from linolenic acid.

Another important factor when discussing essential fatty acids is balancing the omega-3 to omega-6 in your pet's diet (at this time less is known about the benefit of omega-9 fatty acids for our pets). Omega-6 fatty acids tend to be seen as pro-inflammatory, whereas omega-3 fatty acids are viewed as anti-inflammatory – each playing their own role in various functions of the body. Balancing them, to a certain extent, is based upon these principles. Because omega-6 fatty acids are supplied in the diet it fits best into this theory to give your pet an oil containing primarily omega-3 fatty acids (especially one including EPA and DHA).

Selecting the proper Essential Fatty Oil



MOUNTAIN DOG FOOD
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Selecting the Proper Oil

With so many products on the market, each with their own benefits, it can be overwhelming at times to wade through the information. A brief background on the essential fatty acids themselves should help give more insight when deciphering the label as well as the decision process.

Omega-3 fatty acids:

Linolenic acid

Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

Omega-6 fatty acids:

Linoleic acid

Gamma-Linolenic acid (GLA)

Omega-9 fatty acids:

Oleic acid

The essential fatty acids (omega 3,6 and 9) are necessary components for reproduction, formation of cell membranes, normal hair development and wound healing. Omega-6 fatty acids are naturally found in animal based protein sources and are therefore readily supplied by the raw diet. Omega-3 fatty acids can be found in both animal (I.e. fish/marine oils) and plant sources, although the plant based sources (I.e. flax and hemp seeds) only supply linolenic acid.

The following information is a comparison of various oils available (looking at their benefits and drawbacks) in an attempt to make the decision for you an easier one:

Oil	Omega 3	Omega 6	Omega 9	Pros	Cons
3-6-9	Linolenic acid, EPA, DHA	Linoleic Acid, GLA	Oleic Acid	Contains all of the omega fatty acids - preserved with vit E	Most of the omega-3 comes from linolenic. Contains flax seed oil*
3-6-9 Vegetarian	Linolenic acid	Linoleic Acid, GLA	Oleic acid	Contains all of the omega fatty acids - preserved with vit E	Most of the omega-3 comes from linolenic. No fish oils used. Contains flax seed oil*
6 in One	Linolenic Acid			Contains a blend of 6 oils - including salmon oil	The omega-3 comes from only linolenic acid. Contains flax seed oil*
Arctic Vigor	Linolenic Acid, EPA, DHA	Linoleic Acid	Oleic Acid	Contains primarily omega-3 from EPA and DHA	Also supplies omega-6 although to a lesser degree than other oils.
Flax Seed*	Linolenic Acid			Contains Vit A & E	The omega-3 comes from only linolenic acid.
Hemp Seed	Linolenic Acid	Linoleic Acid, GLA		Contains both omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids	The omega-3 comes only from linolenic acid.
Evening Primrose		Linoleic Acid, GLA		Contains Vit A & D	Does not provide omega-3 fatty acids.
Cod Liver	Linolenic Acid			Contains Vit A & D	Minimal omega-3 compared to straight fish oil.
Halibut Liver	Linolenic Acid			Contains Vit A & D	Minimal omega-3 compared to straight fish oil.
Salmon	EPA, DHA			Provides both EPA and DHA	Capsule form - may be harder to administer.
Tuna	EPA, DHA			Provides both EPA and DHA	Capsule form - may be harder to administer.

* - Flax seed is a grain and may cause allergic reactions in dogs with grain allergies.