



NUTRITION TO SUPPORT EPILEPTIC DOGS

With regard to epilepsy in dogs; there is a possible connection between grain ingredients and seizures. This is because grains have a high phytate content which impairs mineral absorption. This is relevant as magnesium, zinc and calcium deficiency are linked to seizures. The chief grains to avoid are those with a high gluten content; i.e. wheat, oats and rye. Gluten stimulates opioid receptors in the brain making them more susceptible to seizures. All of the Arden Grange recipes are free from wheat, oats and rye.

Omega 3 fatty acids can help to maintain the structure and function of the cellular and sub-cellular membranes as well as support normal growth, especially of blood vessels and nerves. A supplement such as Grizzly Salmon Oil may be a beneficial addition to an epileptic dog's diet (unless fed the Salmon or Sensitive as these contain 3 and 4 x the levels in the other recipes respectively). Evening primrose oil must not be used however since this contains gamma linolenic acid which is thought to stimulate the production of a hormone-like compound called prostaglandin. Prostaglandin can lower a dog's epileptic seizure threshold meaning that a fit is more likely. There are many cases of this reported in epileptic humans taking EPO. Alpha linolenic acid; as found in linseed (present in the Arden Grange recipes) is fine however.

We often recommend our Arden Grange Performance for epileptic dogs since it contains a number of nutrients that may be beneficial. Taurine is included, and this plays a critical role in the function of the nervous system. Taurine deficiency is widely recognised as a cause of seizures in people, cats and dogs. In addition to its specific benefits to the brain, it also affects blood sugar levels (implicated in seizures) and assists in the body's proper use of minerals (especially magnesium, zinc and copper). Taurine also plays an important role in cardiac function.

Grape seed extract is also included, and this has been recognised as one of the most powerful antioxidants. It contains natural free radical scavengers and bioflavonoid complexes that are rapidly absorbed and distributed throughout the body. (Whilst grapes are of course poisonous to dogs, grape seed extract is perfectly safe). It has also been shown to promote healthy cholesterol levels and a healthy cardio-vascular system. Plasma carnitine levels are decreased in many people with epilepsy, and therefore L-Carnitine supplementation in dogs may be helpful too. This is also in the Performance recipe.

A change of diet is not guaranteed to help, and although we have had a number of emails from customers with epileptic dogs who have had a reduced incidence of fits since feeding the Performance, this is anecdotal evidence rather than that acquired through formal scientific trials. Little is known about idiopathic epilepsy; in fact idiopathic means "cause unknown".

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