

Lustrous POOCH

10 Foods to Make a Dog's Coat Glow

by Suzi Beber

To keep our dog's skin and coat healthy, supplements may first come to mind, especially oils and powders. However, whole foods deserve a closer look for naturally elegant results.

Chia

Chia seeds contain more healthy omega-3 fats and fiber than flax or other grain seeds and are a good source of protein and antioxidants, notes Patrick Skerrett, executive editor of Harvard Health Publications. They are abundant in alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a plant-based form of omega-3, which combats skin inflammation and improves the skin's texture and softness, says holistic nutritionist Melissa Diane Smith, of Tucson, Arizona.

Eggs

Eggs are nutritional powerhouses containing the most bioavailable protein for dogs. Eggs have vitamin A, which promotes cell turnover. Their zinc further supports protein synthesis and cell division, necessary for wound healing, the formation of connective tissue and skin health, according to the National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements. Egg yolks provide a valuable source of biotin, effective in treating dry skin, seborrhea and itching associated with skin allergies, reports *PetEducation.com*, a website of veterinarians Dr. Race Foster and Dr. Marty



Smith, owners of Foster and Smith, Inc. Avoid raw eggs, as they contain avidin, which interferes with the metabolism of biotin, fats, glucose and amino acids, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Almonds

Almonds contain the entire vitamin E family of tocopherols and tocotrienols. "Deficiency of vitamin E has been implicated in the development of certain dermatological disorders in dogs," counsels Lee Russell McDowell, Ph.D., in *Vitamins in Animal and Human Nutrition*. Almonds are also an excellent source of B vitamins, copper, manganese, magnesium, zinc and bioflavonoids, with a trace of omega-3. While safe in small quantities for larger dogs, whole almonds are not easily digested and can upset the stomach and create intestinal distress. Almonds are easily ground into a powder using a blender, and almond meal is also available at many grocery stores.

Coconut

Renowned herbalist Juliette de Bairacli Levy pioneered the use of coconut in natural diets for companion animals. Raw coconut contains medium-chain, saturated fats that transform into energy and can decrease bacterial growth, irritation and inflammation, according to

naturopathic physician Bruce Fife, a certified nutritionist, doctor of naturopathy and author of *The Coconut Oil Miracle*.

Carob

Carob, the fruit of the *Ceratonia siliqua* tree, is rich in natural sugars, vitamins and minerals. Free of the stimulants caffeine and theobromine found in chocolate, it's safe for dogs and its vitamin E supports skin health. Recent research published in the *Iraqi Postgraduate Medical Journal* shows that carob also has natural antibacterial properties.

Oats

A fortifying cereal low in starch and high in mineral content, especially potassium and phosphorus, oats also harbor calcium, magnesium, B vitamins and iron. The grain's primary benefit to skin and coat is its soluble fiber content, which also helps a dog's gastrointestinal system to remove toxins.

Liver

Liver from grass-fed animals enhances healthy skin. Nutrients include calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, iron, zinc, copper, vitamins A, C, D, E and eight B vitamins, including thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, folic acid and biotin.

Wild Salmon

Cooked wild salmon is ripe with omega-3 fatty acids, which along with benefiting the skin and coat, appear to boost the immune system, and may assist dogs with allergies, according to the article "10 'People' Foods for Dogs," by Elizabeth Pask and Laura Scott.

Cranberries

Cranberries contain a variety of bioactive components, including proanthocyanidins and anthocyanin antioxidants, plus the phytochemical ellagic acid. "Animal experiments show that supplementation with anthocyanins effectively prevents inflammation and subsequent blood vessel damage," explains Northern California Registered Dietitian Marilyn Sterling, who also points to myriad studies of the antioxidant power of proanthocyanidins. According to the American Institute of Cancer Research, ellagic acid can prevent skin cancers.

The 16th-century herbalist Henry Lyte documented their use in treating skin wounds and eczema.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes can be considered a skin superfood, because they hold a high level of beta-carotene (a precursor form of vitamin A) and are a good source of vitamin E. Their vitamin C content, which increases with cooking, facilitates collagen production, contributes to photoprotection, decreases pho-

todamage and supports wound healing, according to a report by Alexander J. Michels, Ph.D., of the Oregon State University Linus Pauling Institute.

Suzi Beber is the founder of The Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund via Canada's University of Guelph Veterinary College and Teaching Hospital Pet Trust. She also contributes to Animal Wellness magazine, from which this article was adapted and used with permission.

Chow Down

Try to use organic ingredients whenever possible for all of these recipes.



Chia Coconut Crunch

1½ cups rolled oats
1 tsp baking powder
½ cup coconut flour
1½ Tbsp chia seeds
¼ cup coconut oil
1 cup almond butter
2 whole eggs
1 tsp pure vanilla
¼ cup carob chips

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cover a large cookie sheet with parchment paper. Combine all ingredients except carob chips. After ingredients are well incorporated, add carob chips. Form small balls of dough with hands, place on cookie sheet and lightly flatten each ball with the back of a fork. Bake for 10 minutes in preheated oven. Cool completely before serving. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container or bag.

Oats 'n Egg Scramble

2 eggs, whisked
½ cup rolled oats
¼ cup goat's milk
Olive oil

Combine ingredients in a medium-sized bowl; let sit for 10 minutes. Lightly coat a pan with olive oil, add bowl contents and then scramble like regular eggs. Cool before serving as a topping to a dog's regular meal.

Raw Liver Paté

½ lb liver (chicken or bison)
2 eggs
1 tsp sea salt or kelp
1 Tbsp olive oil

Whirl all ingredients together in a food processor or blender until smooth. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Use as a topper for regular meals.



Cooked Liver Paté

Same ingredients as liver paté. Hard boil the eggs and set aside. Lightly sauté liver in a pan with the olive oil, sea salt and kelp. Cook until pink is gone. Cool and then combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth. Serve and store as indicated above.

Source: Recipes courtesy of Suzi Beber.