

used or stored. **Pup Prep:** Don't overdo it, as too much chromium can be detrimental. Use 1 teaspoon for a small dog, 2 tsp. for a medium dog and 1 tbsp. for a large dog. Mix it with food and introduce it slowly.

phosphorus as well as Vitamin D, Vitamin B-3 (niacin) and Vitamin A in its preformed state, sardines are a great addition to any doggie diet. **Pup Prep:** Choose a low-sodium, water-packed variety and mash well, checking for and removing obvious bones, which can lodge in the esophagus or splinter and cause dangerous tears in the gut.

8. Wheat Grass

Also known as pet grass or cat grass. The young grass of the wheat plant (though it doesn't have the same composition as wheat), it has chlorophyll, fibre, Vitamin E, phosphorus, magnesium, iron and potassium as well as some protein and carotenoids. Wheat grass is also purported to decrease constipation and help with upset stomachs. **Pup Prep:** Buy or grow a pot of wheat grass and make it available to your dog. Many dogs eat grass, and wheat grass is an improvement over the potentially herbicide-laden, contaminated grass growing along the curb.

9. Turnip Greens

Unfamiliar to many humans and dogs alike. Turnip greens are an excellent source of Vitamin K, Vitamin C, carotenoids, most B vitamins, fibre and manganese. They are also a good source of calcium, copper, potassium, magnesium and phosphorus, and provide a complement of antioxidants. **A caveat:** Turnip greens are bitter and contain appreciable amounts of oxalates that can bind minerals as well as goitrogens, which may interfere with thyroid function in susceptible individuals. **Pup Prep:** To minimize these effects and maximize palatability, sauté or blanch. Most recipes call for sautéing, which maintains the greens' nutritional density and increases the odds that your dog (and you) will eat these healthful veggies.

10. Nutritional Yeast

Grown on mineral-enriched molasses and used as a food supplement. This inactive yeast is high in protein, B vitamins and chromium and several minerals as well. Protein is needed for muscle and cell growth, B vitamins are essential for energy metabolism and enzyme function, and chromium is important for insulin release and action, which allows carbohydrates and other fuels to be taken up by the cells and

4. Papaya

Readily available in most markets. This tropical fruit contains papain, an enzyme often used as a meat tenderizer. It assists in the breakdown of proteins and thus is considered a “digestive aid.” Ripe papaya is an excellent source of carotenoids and potent antioxidants, and is also high in Vitamin C, most of the B vitamins, potassium, magnesium and fibre. These nutrients benefit eye health, blood vessel integrity and joint function. **Pup Prep:** Scoop out a ripe papaya and serve as a snack (remove the seeds; they’re edible, but have a peppery flavour that may be too much for your dog).

5. Pumpkin

Low in calories and high in soluble fibre. Pumpkin makes a nice treat for the pooch with an upset tummy and also helps resolve bouts of diarrhoea. It is low in sodium and exceptionally high in carotenoids, potassium and Vitamin C, and has some calcium and B vitamins. It can be used as a fat substitute when making dog treats.

Pup Prep: Steam and mash fresh pumpkin, or take the easy way out and use canned pumpkin (organic, if possible). If using canned, read the label carefully to be sure you’re getting 100 percent pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling, which has added salts and sugars.

6. Cranberries

An excellent source of Vitamin C, fibre and manganese. Cranberries also contain Vitamin K and phytochemicals thought to inhibit the ability of bad bacteria to stick to and infect the urinary tract. In addition, there may be benefits for blood vessel health and antioxidant protection. **Pup Prep:** Cranberries are very sour. To offset their tartness, combine them with a sweeter fruit, such as a banana or ripe papaya, for a healthful treat.

7. Sardines

A terrific protein source. Sardines contain appreciable amounts of the amino acid tryptophan as well as Omega-3 fatty acids and Vitamin B-12 (a hard-to-come-by B vitamin that is essential for cell function). A good source of selenium, calcium and

Chard's nutrients have the potential to maintain bone health, blood vessel integrity, eye health and immune function and benefit optimal muscle function and energy production. **Pup Prep:** Offer your dog some blanched, chopped chard enhanced with a bit of olive oil; if you're lucky, your best friend will want the blanching water too!

1. Carrots

Great dog snack—crunchy, sweet and most dogs really like them. They are loaded with carotenoids, fibre, Vitamin C and Vitamin K (needed for blood clotting) as well as potassium. They have magnesium, manganese, most of the B vitamins and phosphorus, which is required for energy production, among other things. **Pup Prep:** Start out slowly, as too much fibre may produce flatulence. If your pup sticks her nose up at them, try soaking lightly steamed carrots in chicken broth to increase their appeal.

2. Green Beans

A perfect addition to any doggie dinner. Some dogs love them raw, but most prefer them blanched, which makes for easier digestion. An excellent source of Vitamin K and fiber, these veggies also contain Vitamin C, carotenoids, potassium, B vitamins, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, iron and manganese. **Pup Prep:** Blanch, don't boil them to death and lose all those nutrients!

3. Parsley

Not your grandmother's garnish. Parsley freshens dog breath in addition to providing phytochemicals. It also has Vitamin C, Vitamin K, carotenoids, B vitamins, iron and limonene (an oil that kills bad mouth bacteria). Italian flat leaf parsley has a stronger odor and flavor than the curly leaf variety, but a similar nutritional profile. **Pup Prep:** Fresh is best; chop it and mix a small amount with food (too much parsley can act as a diuretic).

7. Nori

Dried edible seaweed (red algae species), a Japanese staple. Often associated with sushi, nori is available in some supermarkets, and certainly in those with Asian food items. It has protein, galactans (a soluble fiber), Vitamins C, E and all the Bs, and minerals such as zinc and copper. It also contains some lesser-known sterols and chlorophyll, which have been investigated for their effects on regulating metabolism. Nori may have beneficial effects on fat metabolism, immune function and anti-tumour response. Pup Prep: Nori does not have a strong odour or flavour, and the paper-thin sheets can be torn and soaked in broth, then added to food, or just added dry. Puppy sushi, anyone?

8. Blueberries

Member of the Heath family and loaded with phytochemicals. Available year round either fresh or frozen, blueberries are a great treat for your dog. The deep blue colour comes from anthocyanidins, which are potent antioxidants, and the berries also supply Vitamin C, Vitamin E, manganese and fiber. Slow introduction in small quantities is particularly essential here; as anyone who has ever gorged on this tasty fruit knows, the blueberry “trots” are most unpleasant (and you’re the one who will be cleaning up!). Be judicious. Pup Prep: Rinse and serve whole, or mash lightly.

9. Rosemary

Aromatic mint relative. Rosemary provides some fiber, iron and calcium in addition to several phytochemicals thought to improve immune function and act as anti-inflammatory agents and antioxidants. Pup Prep: Wash a sprig of fresh rosemary and add the minced needles (leaves) to foods.

10. Swiss Chard

A pretty veggie known as a “green.” Chard belongs to the same family as beets and spinach and has tons of nutrients, which are best maintained by blanching and not boiling the leaves and stalks to mush. (Some feel that, in order to lap up any leeches nutrients, the water in which chard is blanched should be consumed too.) Blanching sweetens the leaves and frees up some of the oxalates, which can bind minerals.

4. Flaxseeds

Small seeds—known for their alpha linolenic acid (ALA) content and benefits to coat, skin, bone and brain function—that pack a big nutritional punch. These seeds are also high in fibre and lignans (a fibre type), which may be beneficial for insulin action. They are a great source of manganese, pyridoxine, magnesium, phosphorus and copper. They also contain the B vitamin folate, which is important for cell regulation. Pup Prep: Grind fresh flaxseeds, which are nutty and crunchy; flaxseed oil is also available in most health food stores and contains a more concentrated amount of ALA. Add the ground seeds or a teaspoon of oil to your dog's food and increase the nutrient density of any meal. (Note: Store in refrigerator to maintain freshness.)

5. Yogurt

Active cultures known as probiotics (necessary, friendly bacteria) help keep the bad bacteria away. Yogurt, which may improve gut function, contains a number of nutrients, including protein, calcium, phosphorus, Vitamin B12, potassium, zinc and iodine. It is also a fair source of other B vitamins such as riboflavin and pantothenic acid (required for enzyme action and energy production, as well as other cellular functions). Pup Prep: A dollop of non-fat yogurt is a great way to disguise some yucky medicines.

6. Salmon

Bursting with Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s do wonders for skin, coat and brain as well as limit inflammatory processes that cause arthritic pain and other chronic canine conditions. (If your dog has any of these conditions, ask your vet if fish oil in capsule form might help.) Salmon is also an excellent protein source, with many essential vitamins and minerals.* Pup Prep: When you're cooking salmon steaks for yourself, toss a few extra on the barbie for your dog. Refrigerate or dehydrate the grilled chunks and serve them cold.

Liven Up Your Dogs Dinner

1. Banana

High in potassium (great for muscle and blood vessel function as well as for regulating the acidity of body fluids), fibre (a handy home remedy for the occasional bout of doggy diarrhoea or constipation) and magnesium (important for energy transport and protein building in the body). Bananas have lots of pyridoxine (Vitamin B6), which helps metabolize proteins and regulates blood cell function so the blood can bring more oxygen to the brain and muscle. They also contain Vitamin C, an antioxidant that protects cells from damage and helps build cartilage. Pup Prep: Mash a banana and mix it in with your dog's food. Be forewarned that the compounds in bananas that make them smell banana-y are offensive to some canines.

2. Rutabaga

A sorely ignored veggie, similar to a turnip. Rutabagas are very good boiled and mashed. They're available year-round in most grocery stores and keep well. Their high levels of Vitamin C, potassium and carotenoids (precursors to Vitamin A) aid eye health and maintenance of DNA activation in cells. They are also important in immune system function and have a number of lesser-known phytochemicals, which are shown to reduce the risk of several chronic diseases associated with aging. Pup Prep: Peel, boil and mash the rutabaga, then add a little bit of safflower or olive oil; these oils are not harmful to dogs, who need fats and handle them far better than do humans.

3. Sweet Potato

Loaded with nutrients, such as the carotenoids and Vitamin C, in addition to some lesser known antioxidants and phytochemicals. They are high in pyridoxine, potassium, fibre and magnesium. They also are good sources of copper, iron and manganese—all essential minerals that perform myriad functions in cells, from transporting oxygen to assisting in the assembly of proteins. Pup Prep: As with rutabaga, boil, mash and add a bit of good oil.