

Killing with kindness: Brits feed their dogs harmful human foods

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Thursday, 25 October 2018

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Nearly half of UK dog owners surveyed feed their pooch human food twice a week, with over a quarter letting their pooches indulge in cheese, dairy and salty foods, a new study reveals.

Research into the habits of 1,000 dog owners by Every paw pet healthcare (<https://www.everypaw.com>) examined the daily diets of canines, finding that owners are willing to give their dogs human foods – even if they may be harmful.

According to the study, nearly half of dog owners admit they give their dog human food one to two times a week, and over a quarter (27%) are happy to let their dogs indulge in cheese, despite dairy foods been on the list of the most common food allergies in canines.

One in five (19%) also think it's fine to feed their dogs bacon, despite salt causing potential threats such as upset stomachs and bloating.

When looking into owner's views on the emerging dog food trend raw meat, nearly half (44%) say their dogs are on a strict raw meat diet, even though vets say it could be harmful – as raw meat contains bacteria that could potentially cause food poisoning.

The study looks to draw some conclusions as to what pet owners could be doing better to ensure their pets stay fit and healthy, and identifies diet as an area in need of improvement.

As part of the research, Every paw recruited three unfit dogs to partake in the Get Fido Fit Challenge (<https://www.everypaw.com/get-fido-fit>), in which the dogs were given strict diet and exercise plans for six weeks, based on the expert advice of Every paw vets. They were given a PitPat tracker to track their progress, and with a few lifestyle changes, every dog lost weight and became more active.

Every paw vet Dr Anna Foreman BVetMed MRCVS said: "Most human foods should be avoided as they can be high in salt, fats and very calorific – feeding your dog a can of tuna, for example, is equivalent to a person eating three doughnuts. It's especially dangerous to feed dogs dairy products because, as well as being high in calories, dogs do not have the enzyme needed to break down these foods, leading to upset stomachs."

"The research shows that owners have a relaxed attitude to feeding their dogs bacon, despite higher salt foods predisposing to hypertension, heart disease and kidney problems. Raw food is an emerging trend, but it may carry a greater risk of exposure to food poisoning organisms, including E Coli, Salmonella and Clostridia"

Rachel Mulheron, Director of Pet Insurance at Every paw said: "The health and wellbeing of pets is our passion. It's great to see how much people love their dogs, but the research suggests some aren't giving their dogs the right exercise and diet.

"Dog obesity is a definite problem in the UK, and it's important owners know how to take care of their pups for a long and fulfilled life. Our Get Fido Fit Challenge (<https://www.everypaw.com/get-fido-fit>) shows it's possible to make a huge difference to your dog's health in a relatively short space of time, with just a few small changes".

For more information on the study or to follow along with the Get Fido Fit challenge, head to the Everypaw. (<https://www.everypaw.com/get-fido-fit>)

About Everypaw

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Notes to Editors

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