

Homemade treats

Written by By Sam Mazzota King Syndicate
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DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My new puppy's training is going very well, and he responds very well to rewards of little treats. I worry about feeding him so many processed, store-bought snacks though. What are some natural or homemade alternatives for treats? — Maggie T., Nashua, N.H.

A: Many alternative recipes for homemade doggie treats are available on the internet and at the bookstore, but the healthiest ones share many common features. This means that you can find quite a few good recipes out there, or develop a few of your own.

Common ingredients in dog treats are meat protein (either from fresh meats, broths or strained baby foods), wholegrain flours (like wheat, oats, corn or rice), eggs and powdered supplements (like brewer's yeast or garlic). A variety of flavorings can be added, including peanut butter, sugar or molasses, vanilla, salt, and small amounts of cheese or milk. Dry or instant yeast can be added to biscuit-type recipes, to allow the dough to rise before baking.

A popular training asset is liver treats, which can be made fairly easy and which last about four to five days if stored properly (in an airtight container and refrigerated). Chicken livers, eggs and sweetener are pureed, flour or cornmeal is mixed in (some owners add powdered supplements as well) and the mixture is baked, cooled and sliced into bite-size treats.

Certain foods are never safe for dogs, so don't use any recipe that contains these ingredients: chocolate, onions, raisins/grapes or macadamia nuts. They seem like fairly innocent foods, but can cause serious health problems in dogs.

Baking and testing these snacks out on your puppy can be a lot of fun. Remember, you can also share recipes with other dog owners and perhaps find the perfect treat for your companion.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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