



*Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center*

Wayzata

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*Westonka Animal Hospital & Laser Surgery Center*

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*“Where Smart Pets Bring Their People”*

## Is preparing my pet’s food at home better than buying commercial foods?

Some owners with pets that have particular health problems may wish to participate in the management of their pet’s condition by providing a home cooked diet, even if a commercially available diet would be appropriate. These owners may have a belief that a home cooked diet is safer, more natural, or more healthful than a commercially available diet. They may wish to avoid certain ingredients (such as grains, chemical preservatives, or by-products) or to include certain ingredients (such as specific protein or fat sources). Other owners wish to feed their pets according to their own philosophical views, and choose home prepared diets that are vegetarian, organic, or raw.

Another common reason owners feed a home cooked diet is when a pet refuses commercially available diets. In some pets, this is a learned behavior while in others it may be the result of a food aversion secondary to a disease condition (such as kidney failure). Finally, pets may have a particular combination of diseases for which no suitable commercial diet exists. In these cases, a home prepared diet can be an appropriate solution.

In general, home prepared diets are more expensive than commercially available diets. Of course, they are also more time consuming to prepare. There are many recipes for home prepared pet diets available on the Internet and in books; however, the vast majority of these are inadequate and unbalanced and NOT compiled by a board certified veterinary nutritionist. The recipes are either vague in instruction, contain errors or omissions in formulation, incorporate potentially problematic ingredients, or feature outdated strategies for addressing specific disease conditions. They may also lack specificity about the exact amount to feed a particular size of pet.

If you wish to prepare your pet’s food at home, consider getting a customized recipe and consultation with a board certified veterinary nutritionist or consider one of the following websites:

<http://www.petdiets.com/>

[www.balanceit.com](http://www.balanceit.com)

Commercially available pet foods have been used successfully for years. There are many kinds of foods available, from canned to dry. Some are complete and balanced and others are meant for supplemental or intermittent feeding. Safety problems (with regard to both nutritional adequacy and toxin/microbiological contamination) are occasionally documented in both commercial foods as well as home-prepared human foods. Most manufacturers utilize sophisticated mechanisms for quality control and food safety, including screening and reporting systems. As such, commercial foods remain a consistent, safe, and healthful option for feeding pets.