

Corn is a poorly digested “filler” that causes allergies.

It's a myth

You may hear that a plant-based ingredient such as corn is a “filler” that shouldn't be included in a pet's diet because it is poorly digested and can cause allergies.

The facts

Corn is an excellent source of many nutrients.

- “Fillers” may be defined as feed ingredients with little or no nutritional value. Based on this description, corn is certainly not a filler.
- Corn provides a good source of carbohydrates, protein and essential fatty acids in the diets of dogs and cats.
- Corn can be found in many forms, all of which can contribute to nutritious diets. For example, corn gluten meal contains 60% to 70% protein and is an excellent source of essential amino acids. And whole corn or corn meal provides highly digestible carbohydrates as an energy source.
- Corn is a good source of linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid required by both dogs and cats.
- It also contains abundant amounts of antioxidants, such as vitamin E and beta-carotene.

Corn gluten meal is highly digestible.

- Corn gluten meal is easy to digest, making its nutrients readily available to your pet.
- Corn gluten meal contains many essential amino acids, so when it is properly combined with other protein sources, it can contribute to highly digestible and nutritious diets.

Corn is not a common cause of allergies.

- Dogs and cats can develop allergies to any protein, including meats and grains. However, it is estimated that only 10% of allergic skin conditions in dogs and cats are caused by food.¹
- Corn does not appear on the list of most common food allergies in dogs or cats.
- The most common food allergens in dogs are beef, dairy products and wheat, followed by lamb, egg, chicken and soy.²
- In cats, the most common food allergens are beef, dairy products and fish.

Corn is a high-quality ingredient.

- The quality of corn in pet foods can vary greatly.
- There are five grades of corn quality according to the USDA; grades 1 and 2 are traditionally used in human food products.
- Purina's standard for all of its pet foods is grades 1 and 2.

Remember

It's the overall quality of the pet food that makes it a good choice for your pet.

Corn is available in many forms and is used to create digestible and nutritious diets that deliver all the essential nutrients dogs and cats need.

1. Outerbridge CA. Nutritional management of skin diseases. In: Fascetti AJ, Delaney SJ, eds. *Applied Veterinary Clinical Nutrition*. Danvers, MA: Wiley-Blackwell; 2012:157–174.
2. Roudebush P, et al. Adverse reactions to food. In: Hand MS, et al., eds. *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition*. 4th ed. Topeka, KS: Mark Morris Institute; 2000:431–453.