

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued three alerts (July 2018, Feb 2019, and June 2019) regarding a connection between cases of Dilated Cardiomyopathy and diet. **As of April 30, 2019 there have been 560+ cases and 100+ deaths.**

- 90% of cases have been in dogs eating Grain Free diets
- Most implicated diets contain peas, chickpeas, beans or other lentils, potatoes, or sweet potatoes
- Cases are under-reported due to lack of awareness and lack of recognition of DCM
- **Partial list of brands with reported cases include:** Acana, Zignature, Taste of the Wild, 4Health, Earthborn Holistic, Blue Buffalo, Nature’s Domain, Fromm, Merrick, California Naturals, Natural Balance, Origen, Nature’s Variety, Nutrisource, Nutro, Rachel Ray Nutrish, Kirkland (Costco), Wellness Core, Nutriscience, Canidae, Solid Gold, Primal (Raw)

How do we know the DCM is diet related?

- Non-genetically pre-disposed breeds are affected
- Dogs in same household on same diet have been diagnosed
- Young healthy dogs that would not be expected to develop DCM are affected
- Heart abnormalities have resolved and dogs have recovered with diet change; whereas genetic DCM is progressive and dogs do not recover

Why are the diets causing heart disease?

- The exact cause is currently unknown and research is ongoing.
- The most likely theory is a formulation problem with these brands which is causing abnormal absorption or metabolism of the amino acid taurine. Taurine deficiency is known to cause DCM.
- It may be related to ingredients which bind taurine or interfere with taurine metabolism. Suspicious ingredients include lentils (peas, chickpeas, beans, etc) and potatoes, sweet potatoes which have been used to replace traditional grains in the diet.
- Taurine is not deficient in the diets. Adding or supplementing taurine does not prevent the problem.

What should you do if your dog has been eating one of these diets?

- Consider having your dog tested for DCM. Dogs often do not show symptoms in the early stages of the disease but can have sudden onset heart failure or even sudden death. Speak with a veterinarian about testing options.
- **Switch your dog to a non-grain free diet from a brand of food which employs a team of board certified veterinary nutritionists and does feeding trials and research on their foods.** (See [WSAVA](#) guidelines). **The only brands which currently meet WSAVA guidelines are Hills, Royal Canin, Purina, and Eukanuba/Iams.**

For links to the FDA investigation, the latest research, guidelines for food selection, and other resources visit bluespringsanimalhospital.com. Click Links and Nutritional-DCM.