



Pet Love

VEG WITH YOUR PET

YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO SHARE YOUR GARDEN'S BOUNTY WITH YOUR BELOVED PAL. BUT BEFORE YOU DO, LEARN WHICH FRESH VEGGIES ARE THE SAFEST FOR THEM TO SNACK ON.

If you enjoy growing garden vegetables, you may want to toss a few fresh picks to your furry friend. While vegetables can be a healthy, low-calorie treat for your pal, some can actually be harmful. We consulted experts to help you know which fresh produce is the best bet for your pets.

SAFE VEGGIES

"Pets should be getting all the nutrients they need through their regular daily diet," says Michael San Filippo, spokesperson for the American Veterinary Medical Association. "But vegetables such as carrots, green beans and snap peas can provide a healthy, low-calorie snack for pets, particularly omnivorous dogs."

Veterinarian Stephanie Lantry, co-owner of Animal Medical Clinic of Gulf Gate in Sarasota, Florida, agrees. "Celery, cucumbers, white potatoes and sweet potatoes are also safe," says Dr. Lantry, who serves as an expert with the national pet telehealth app Airvet.

Add broccoli to the list, too, which is packed with beneficial fiber, vitamins and minerals.

VEGGIES TO AVOID

They may add a punch of flavor to your favorite dishes, but don't feed onions, garlic, leeks or chives to your dog—they're toxic.

"They can cause life-threatening anemia and gastrointestinal upsets," explains Anthony Hall, DVM, of Texas-based privatevetconsulting.com. And San Filippo notes that even onion powder or garlic seasoning can pose risks, so you shouldn't use them in homemade treats, either.

Certain mushrooms can be toxic, so it's wise to avoid them altogether, Dr. Hall advises.

Likewise, rhubarb can cause neurological and gastrointestinal toxicities, and unripe tomatoes can damage the nervous system, GI tract and kidneys.

PET-FRIENDLY PREP

For those pet-friendly veggies you can feel happy about sharing with your pet, the experts share these tips:

- Wash vegetables before serving to eliminate harmful bacteria.
- Keep veggies close to their original form, as cooking removes some nutrients. However, cooked vegetables are digested most easily.
- If serving raw veggies, cut them into little pieces, especially for smaller dogs.
- If cooking vegetables, avoid frying or adding salt or butter.

If your pet has specific health issues or is on a restricted diet, talk with your vet before adding new foods. ●