



by Dr. Nancy Kay

Glucosamine for arthritis, probiotics for tummy troubles, multivitamins for nose-to-tail wellness: The pet store is looking more and more like a drugstore as people search for natural ways to care for the health of their furry family members. Unfortunately, the quality of nutritional supplements for pets can be hit or miss. Because pet supplements are not subject to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval process and there are no regulations governing specific product formulations, there's no way of knowing whether a particular product is free of dangerous contaminants, or whether the amount of active ingredients it contains is too little, too much or just right.

How can you know if the product you're giving your pet is safe and effective? First—before you buy—discuss the supplement and potential adverse side effects with your vet. If you do decide to try supplements, use the ACCLAIM system to guide your choices—the same system used by veterinarians. Each supplement you're considering should have:

- A company name you recognize.
- Clinical research supporting its effectiveness on the manufacturer's website; look in the section for medical professionals.
- Contents that are clearly indicated on the label.
- Label claims that seem realistic. Claims that sound too good to be true probably are.
- Administration recommendations that are specific and easy to follow.
- Identification of lot on the label (usually near the expiration date) to indicate that the product has been inspected for quality. Despite the fact that there is no government regulation of pet health supplements, individual manufacturers should have a quality surveillance system in place to protect consumers.
- Manufacturer information on the label, including a website and/or customer support contact information.


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Petal power for a scratchy throat

If the change of seasons has left you under the weather, try adding a few plants around your house. A recent study found that leafy greens like English ivy, peace lilies and orchids can boost moisture in the air by up to 5 percent. While that's not enough to replace a good old humidifier, these power plants will help combat raw throats and dry, itchy noses.

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