

Soy is an undesirable pet food ingredient.

It's a myth

Misinformation found on the Internet and cited by some pet owners suggests that soy is a poor-quality ingredient that can cause bloat and food allergies in pets.

The facts

Soybeans are the basis for several high-quality ingredients.

- Soy is an excellent source of protein and essential amino acids.
- Soybean oil is rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, including both omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.
- Soy protein provides nine essential amino acids.
- The most common source of soy protein used in pet foods is soybean meal, a protein-rich, low-fat ingredient.

The soy proteins found in pet food can be highly digestible.

- The digestibility of any diet depends on proper cooking and processing.
- Properly processed, complete and balanced diets containing soy can have a total protein digestibility of 85% to 90%.
- The digestibility of defatted soy flour can actually be comparable to that of beef, poultry, beef and bone meal, and poultry by-product meal.¹

Soybean meal does not increase the incidence of flatulence or bloat in dogs.

- Studies have shown that diets containing soybean meal do not increase flatulence or the risk of bloat in dogs.^{2,3}

- Although it was once suggested that fermentation of soy in a dog's stomach caused bloat, minimal fermentation occurs in the stomach of dogs fed soy, and the air in the stomachs of dogs with bloat comes primarily from swallowing air, not from food fermentation.

Soy proteins are not highly allergenic.

- Like any protein, soy can induce an allergic reaction, but it is not a common cause of food allergies in dogs or cats.
- The most common food allergens in dogs are beef, dairy and wheat.⁴
- The most common allergens in cats are beef, dairy and fish.⁴
- When soy protein is hydrolyzed (broken down into smaller parts), as in Purina Veterinary Diets® HA Hydrolyzed™ brand Canine and Feline Formulas, it becomes even less allergenic and is an excellent source of protein for pets with food allergies.

Remember

When included as part of a complete and balanced diet, soy is an excellent source of protein, is highly digestible, does not increase the incidence of flatulence or bloat in dogs, and is not highly allergenic.

1. Murray SM, Patil AR, Fahey GC Jr, et al. Raw and rendered animal by-products as ingredients in dog diets. *J Anim Sci.* 1997;75:2497–2505.
2. Yamka RM, Harmon DL, Schoenherr WD. In vivo measurement of flatulence and nutrient digestibility in dogs fed poultry by-product meal, conventional soybean meal and low-oligosaccharide low-phytate soybean meal. *Am J Vet Res.* 2006;67:88–94.
3. Davenport DJ, Remillard RL, Simpson KL, et al. Gastrointestinal and exocrine pancreatic disease. In: Hand MS, Thatcher CD, Remillard RL, et al, eds. *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition*. 4th ed. Marceline, Mo: Walsworth; 2000:727–810.
4. Verlinden A, Hesta M, Millet S, et al. Food allergy in dogs and cats: a review. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr.* 2006;46:259–273.