



In recent years there have been a number of studies looking at the benefits of fish oils when included in the diets of dogs including puppies and lactating bitches.

Fish oils are rich in the omega-3 fatty acids, Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) and Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA) which we know to be of benefit to many body systems (heart health, skin and coat and gastrointestinal tract for example).

Fish oils, as the name suggests, are most commonly sourced from fish, but other marine species may also be rich in these beneficial oils. EPA and DHA are perfectly safe for dogs to eat and DHA in particular is commonly used as an ingredient in commercially produced human baby milk.

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FISH OILS

When we consider the diet of puppies, EPA and DHA are both crucial for healthy development of the nervous system, especially the brain and the eyes. In the brain DHA helps development of the cells communicating within the brain and carrying messages to and from the brain, and in the eyes it aids the healthy development of the retina; the tissue which lines the inner surface of the eye. Healthy development at an early age will support coordination and the senses throughout life. In addition there have been some studies which suggest that DHA has a positive effect on the ‘trainability’ of puppies improving their ability to learn.

There are clear benefits to selecting a puppy diet with enhanced levels of EPA and DHA and we also know that if a lactating bitch is fed a diet rich in DHA then that DHA will be transferred to her suckling puppies which again will have a benefit to their development. So there’s food for thought (and trainability!).

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