



FAQS | DCM

WHAT IS DCM?

DCM (dilated cardiomyopathy) is a disease of the heart muscle and results in an enlarged heart. As the heart and its chambers become dilated, it becomes harder for the heart to pump, and heart valves may leak, which can lead to a buildup of fluids in the chest and abdomen (congestive heart failure).

ARE THERE ANY DCM CASES WHERE ZIWI PEAK WAS BEING FED?

ZIWI foods are safe. There are no reported cases where dogs showed DCM symptoms while being fed a ZIWI Peak recipe.

IS DCM TREATABLE?

If caught early, heart function may improve in cases that are not linked to genetics with appropriate veterinary treatment and dietary modification.

WHAT CAUSES DCM?

The cause of DCM is unknown. Out of the 77 million dogs in the USA, 0.5% to 1% have DCM. While there has been speculation that DCM is diet related, this has not been scientifically proven and less than 0.1% are speculated to have DCM, related to diet.

DCM has been linked to genetics. Typically, DCM affects large or giant breeds, such as the Doberman Pinscher, Great Dane, or the Irish Wolfhound. It is also seen in Cocker Spaniels associated with taurine deficiency. It is believed to be less common in small and medium breed dogs.

WHAT IS THE FDA INVESTIGATING?

In July 2018, the FDA announced that they have begun investigating reports of DCM in dogs eating certain pet foods. Many labeled as "grain-free," which contained a high proportion of peas, lentils, other legume seeds (pulses), and/or potatoes.

SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT GRAIN-FREE FOODS?

There is no scientific evidence that has connected any type of food to DCM, including grain-free foods. While the FDA is actively investigating a potential correlation between grain-free diets and a rise in cases of DCM, the concern appears focused on diets that utilize large amounts of potatoes, legumes and peas.

DOES ZIWI USE POTATOES OR LEGUMES?

Different from most grain-free foods, ZIWI Peak's raw-inspired recipes are rich in meat and protein, low in carbohydrate and free from unwanted carbohydrates, such as potatoes and lentils.

Our air-dried recipes feature up to 96% meat, organs and seafood — natural sources of taurine, important for heart health. All ZIWI Peak air-dried recipes do not feature any peas, legumes or potatoes.

ZIWI Peak's wet recipes for dogs are high in meat content too, featuring 91% meat, organs and seafood. While our wet recipes do contain chickpeas, they are included as a natural low glycemic binder. Chickpeas are added to our recipes in small inclusions, at 5.8%. A safe and healthier binding alternative than what is typically found in wet foods, our wet recipes for dogs are free from unwanted binders such as agar agar, gums and carrageenan.



WHAT IS TAURINE? DO MY DOGS NEED TAURINE?

Taurine is an amino acid that is crucial for many aspects of your dog's health, from cognitive function to heart health.

Nutritional research indicates that taurine is generally not considered an essential amino acid for dogs, because dogs can synthesize taurine from cystine and methionine. Nearly all the grain-free products reported had methionine-cystine values above the minimum nutritional requirement of .65%, AAFCO's published requirement for adult maintenance food for dogs.

The FDA is still gathering information to better understand taurine metabolism and its potential link to DCM.

DOES ZIWI CONTAIN TAURINE, CYSTINE & METHIONINE?

Yes. All ZIWI recipes feature up to 96% meat, organs and seafood— natural sources of amino acids.

Every ZIWI recipe contains taurine, cystine and methionine. Our website lists the levels of these amino acids for each recipe, under the typical analysis.

For example, the following is their inclusion in our air-dried Free-Range Beef Recipe. AAFCO requires a cystine-methionine inclusion rate for dogs of .65% for adult dogs.

Cystine:	.57%
Methionine:	.86%
Taurine:	.25% (not required by AAFCO)

WHAT BRANDS WERE INCLUDED IN THE FDA REPORT?

The FDA published a list of over 50 brands, which included kibble, canned, raw and home cooked diets. This list includes brands with and without grain, although most cases appear to be foods that feature legumes, pulses (seeds of legumes), and/or potatoes as main ingredients in the food.

I HEARD ZIWI WAS LISTED IN THE REPORT? WHY?

ZIWI Peak was included in the FDA report twice; however, it was not because pet parents reported DCM issues on ZIWI. The opposite is true.

In both cases, the pet parent reported DCM symptoms while feeding another brand of food. Concerned, they switched from the brand they were feeding to ZIWI Peak. In fact, one case reported that upon switching to ZIWI Peak, the patient's heart disease was resolved. The following quote below explains this case (FDA report, June 2019):

"Patient was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) and congestive heart failure (CHF) by myself (veterinary cardiologist) in May 2017. Whole blood taurine levels were submitted to UC Davis and were normal. Owner was feeding a grain free diet, but did not recall the brand. Owners changed diet to a different grain-free diet on their own. This patient's heart disease resolved after the diet was changed. I am submitting this case because DCM does not resolve and I suspect it was related to diet. Unfortunately, we don't know what diet it was. The current diet (and the diet he has been on since November 2017) is called ZIWI Peak Air dried lamb dog food."

Again, there are no cases of DCM reported that are connected to any ZIWI products.



WHAT ABOUT CAT FOODS?

Just as our dog foods, ZIWI Peak's raw-inspired cat recipes are formulated with high inclusions of meat, organs and seafood. With inclusions of 96%, essential amino acids such as taurine are found naturally in ZIWI recipes. Not every animal protein delivers the amount of taurine that cats require, so ZIWI recipes are also supplemented with taurine. Learn more about the taurine levels by reviewing the typical analysis for each recipe on our website.

Like our air-dried dog recipes, our air-dried cat recipes do not feature any peas, legumes or potatoes. Our wet recipes feature 92% meat, organs and seafood and also contain chickpeas. Chickpeas are included as a natural low glycemic binder. They are added to our recipes in small inclusions, at 5.8%. A safe and healthier binding alternative than what is typically found in wet cat foods, our wet recipes for cats are free from unwanted binders such as agar agar, gums and carrageenan.

I'M WORRIED FOR MY PET. CAN I TRUST ZIWI?

At ZIWI, we have a relentless focus on safe foods that deliver peak nutrition. With the support of our in-house nutritional experts, third party veterinarians and nutrition experts at the Massey University of New Zealand, we're committed to our path of crafting foods that are safe and give you peace of mind.

For well over a decade, dogs and cats have thrived on ZIWI Peak recipes. Designed to match their biological requirements, every recipe features high inclusions of meat, is low in carbohydrate and free from unwanted carbohydrates, such as potatoes and lentils.

Foods packed with meat that deliver the protein and the essential amino acids that dogs and cats need to thrive, we're confident that our recipes deliver the ultimate nutrition.

Dogs and cats are our passion too, so if you're still feeling a little worried or if you have additional questions, please contact us. We're happy to help.