

## WHAT IS PET GRASS

- Grown from barley, oat, and wheat grass seeds, which can be found at any lawn and garden shop.
- Gives dogs who live indoors regular exposure to greenery.
- Provides a safe chemical-free indoor alternative to outdoor grazing.
- Some pet owners grow it in long, shallow planters for multi-pet use.



body isn't built to break down plant matter, grass actually hangs around longer.

### 2 Is grass a dietary supplement?

Are there nutrients in grass that a dog needs? This timeless gem is used to explain every taste oddity, from eating dirt to the taste for poop. Is grass the one true superfood? Before getting your pupper certified as a dietary specialist, remember that dogs are also known to eat underwear, rubber duckies and loose change. So, the answer is no.

Animals whose diets depend on grasses and grains, from cows to humans, have longer digestive tracts than those who rely on proteins, like dogs and cats. If you feel that your dog's diet is missing something, it's not grass. Remember, suddenly switching your dog to a different food or adding concentrated supplements is the quickest way to cause stomach upset in dogs.

### 3 Hungry like the wolf?

Another persistent notion is that our dogs eat grass because their distant ancestors did. The idea is that wolves developed an appreciation, both for the animals they ate and for whatever remained inside their prey. By this logic, because I enjoy chicken meat, I should also crave worms and dried corn. I'll keep you posted!

Dogs are opportunistic omnivores who can and will eat anything, regardless of nutritional value. If yours is an indoor dog,

she might eat grass out of simple curiosity. More outside playtime, along with increased exposure to grasses, might make it less appealing, though I admit it's had no effect on my own dog!

### 4 Look to the grass, not the dog!

Is your dog throwing up or pooping after swallowing some fescue or crabgrass? Look to the grass itself for an answer, not the dog. Do you, your neighbors or the park maintenance staff treat grass with herbicides or fertilizers? Wind and rain can easily carry landscaping treatments far beyond the turf it's meant for.

Nearly half of the dogs in one study had traces of lawn chemicals in their urine, despite living in homes with untreated lawns! Waste left by dogs, birds and other wildlife can also attract a dog's nose and tongue and affect normal digestion.

### Coping strategies

Some people try to discourage their dogs from eating grass by stopping less frequently during walks. Others have started cultivating pet grass, which their dogs can nibble on without fear of toxins or additives.

The strangest effect that grass eating has is on dog owners. We may never know why dogs eat grass, but the mental gymnastics we perform trying to justify it to ourselves are more entertaining than the habit itself!



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