

"Carrots & Canines"

Article by Patrick J McDonald

As I researched information about carrots, it was not that surprising to find that some very well-known authors on nutrition have praised the carrot as the king of vegetables. Having used carrot juice to enhance my own eyesight with great success and observing the noticeable good effect carrots had on my dogs it was easy to understand why.

We can trace the use of carrots as far back as 500 BC. It was well known by the ancients and is mentioned by several Greek and Latin writers. These old writers told of how they had made a poultice from the roots that would mitigate the pain of cancerous ulcers and how a combination of the leaves and honey would cleanse running sores and ulcers. They also used an infusion of the root as an aperient.

(Aperient, the mild laxative effect which softens stools without the purging effects).

Carrots are high in beta-carotene, vitamin B-complex, vitamins C, D, E, K, iron, calcium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, magnesium, manganese, sulphur, copper and complex carbohydrates. Dr. Norman Walker D.Sc. (author of *Becoming Younger*) has stated that the carrot molecule observed through modern super microscopes very closely resembles the blood molecule. It is no wonder why the carrot is so nourishing and beneficial.

Carrots do not contain vitamin A, but they are loaded with beta-carotene, a pre-cursor to vitamin A. Beta-carotene is an orange-yellow to red crystalline pigment that exists in three isometric forms designated alpha, beta, and gamma. When beta-carotene is combined with fat or lipids it is converted into vitamin A by the liver. The effects of vitamin A are good skin and coat with cancer fighting activities, especially lung type cancers. Human studies have shown a 50% reduction in heart attacks, stroke and cardiovascular disease for those who took 50mg. of a beta-carotene supplement every day. Another benefit attributed to carrots is the stimulation of appetite. It helps stop diarrhea, firms up loose stool and is also a powerful anti-oxidant. Carrots will enhance the building and spreading of capillaries supplying blood flow to eyes as well as vital organs. It will help clean out the liver. The properties found in carrots are also a natural solvent for ulcerous and cancerous conditions in the digestive tract and its volatile oils help rid the body of parasites like worms.

From an esthetic view point carrots will darken pigment in the coat and very often in the eyes. Reds, mahogany and all shades of brown will darken to a very rich color. The presence of beta carotene in the blood stream will consistently cause this effect. When an excess amount of carotene is in the blood a condition known as carotenemia occurs. In people the skin may turn yellow or orange and in white dogs the coat may get a red tint. The condition is not anything to be concerned about. After reducing or stopping the intake of carotene the skin or coat color will return to normal.

When feeding carrots to a dog they will generally enjoy the flavor and will eat the whole carrot. Dogs do not have the greatest teeth for grinding down carbohydrates like carrots. They have a natural tendency to bite and chew a small amount then gulp. When feeding whole carrots you may notice when cleaning the yard, the dog will pass the undigested carrot through his system and the whole carrot you had given him is still intact. To get the full benefit of carrots they should be finely ground up to a pulp state. This will allow enzymes to completely break down the carrot cell thus releasing all

the beneficial substances within. Whether you grind fresh carrots or use a carrot product where the work has been eliminated for you, I believe you will find carrots a great addition to your canine friends diet.