

Just Food For Dogs brings nutritious canine food to Del Mar Highlands Town Center

Brittany Woolsey



A dog food company that is opening locally is aiming to change San Diegans' mindsets of what they are feeding their furry family members.

Just Food For Dogs, which was established in 2011 in Newport Beach, creates home-cooked meals for dogs. The company's newest store opens Sept. 15 in Carmel Valley at 3485 [Del Mar](#) Heights Road, in the Del Mar Highlands Town Center between Starbucks and Ralphs.

The products look like human food but are nutritionally balanced for dogs. In fact, unlike other dog foods, humans can actually eat the recipes from Just Food for Dogs.

The company will hold a competition featuring local celebrities on Sept. 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Del Mar store, in which the contestants will see who can eat the most products from Just Food For Dogs. Money raised will go toward charities supporting animal welfare.

Founder Shawn Buckley researched and learned that the most nutritious food for dogs, based on veterinary science, was the same that was delivered to delis in grocery stores or served at restaurants. Just Food For Dogs buys its products from the same suppliers, explained CEO Carey Tischler.



"We derive as much nutrients as we can for the dog from the food itself," he

explained. "Our chief medical officer adds a vitamin blend at the end for any gaps that we have."

Tischler said many people are not aware of what is in their dogs' foods based on reading labels alone. Peanut shells, for example, can show up on labels as "vegetable fiber." The shells have little nutritional value.

He said because commercial food is made in factories, that offers little transparency for the general public.

"The pet food industry is largely unregulated and, at the end of the day, it's working off the byproducts of the human food industry," Tischler noted, adding commercial dog food can also often contain preservatives and toxic chemicals. "It's no surprise some of the biggest pet food companies are also big human food companies. It's very scary. One of our core values is the foundation of transparency, which is why we put our kitchen on full display. We want our customers to be able to come in and inspect our ingredients.

Each worker is also trained to be knowledgeable about the company's products and are prepared to answer questions from pet owners about their dogs' diets.

Tischler said owners who are feeding their dogs premium dry kibble products can expect to spend \$1 to \$1.25 more per day when they switch their dogs to Just Food For Dogs. Those who feed their dogs raw or freeze-dried diets can expect to spend less money when they make the transition.

Each of Just Food For Dogs' 10 locations has a full kitchen where 2,000 pounds of food is cooked every day and go through processes such as cutting and mixing.

One recipe is made each day. Proteins include tuna, turkey, beef, chicken, fish, lamb and venison mixed with various vegetables.

Just Food For Dogs, which also has formulas created for special diets, such as

skin or diet issues, is the only fresh food company that has tested its food to show improvement in dogs' diets, Tischler said.

He noted feeding your dog products from Just Food For Dogs is similar to feeding them meals like chicken and rice, a "bland diet" that tends to be recommended by veterinarians for canines with upset stomachs. However, the vitamin blend makes all the difference.

Just Food For Dogs also encourages people to home cook for their dogs and sells the nutrient blend separately so dogs are "getting all the essential vitamins and minerals," Tischler said.

The company's recipes are also given freely away so people can cook batches on their own.

"We actually have what's called a 'Do-It-Yourself Kit' where we sell the nutrient blend because that's the part that you wouldn't know how to do at home," Tischler said. "We have a pamphlet that outlines our recipe, and we have hundreds of thousands of customers who are buying that product and cooking in their own kitchens, adding our nutrient blends, putting some of them into Ziploc bags in their refrigerator and the rest they put in the freezer to thaw out over time as they need them."

The company is planning on opening more stores throughout San Diego.

"Like LA and Orange County, San Diego is a dog-loving community," Tischler said. "We have thousands of customers online who buy our product and asked us when we would open a store in San Diego. It was a natural extension for us to come down here."

For more information about Just Food For Dogs, visit www.JustFoodForDogs.com

Copyright © 2017, [Encinitas Advocate](#)