Can Dogs Have Salmon?

Salmon is a delicious fatty fish enjoyed by many, but as a dog owner, you may wonder if you can share this fish with your pup.

The answer is yes, dogs can have salmon. In fact, salmon has many health benefits for dogs. However, not all salmon is equally good for dogs, and some may even be risky.

We”ll walk you through everything from salmon’s benefits and potential risks to the different forms of salmon and how to incorporate them into your dog's diet.

Is Salmon Safe For Dogs?

Yes, salmon is generally safe for dogs.

However, there are still a few important safety factors to keep in mind before incorporating salmon into your dog’s diet.

Here are some key points to keep in mind to keep your pup safe:

1. **Parasite Risk:** Raw salmon carries a risk of parasites, such as salmonella or flukes. These parasites can cause gastrointestinal issues and pose health risks to your dog. To ensure their safety, it's generally recommended to cook salmon thoroughly before feeding it to your furry friend. Or, if you want to feed it raw, see the section below and follow the FDA’s freezing guidelines to avoid the risk of parasites. lin freezing guidelines for fish to eliminate parasites, .
2. **Seasonings and Bones:** When preparing salmon for your dog, avoid using seasonings, such as salt, garlic, or onion powder, as these can be harmful to dogs. Additionally, remove any large bones (known as pin bones) from the salmon, as these can pose a choking hazard.
3. **Quality and Sourcing:** Ensure the salmon you feed your dog is of high quality and sourced from reputable sources. **Wild-caught salmon** is healthier than farmed salmon, as it tends to have fewer contaminants and a more favorable omega-3 fatty acid profile. Farm-raised salmon, which is commonly found in grocery stores, may be exposed to antibiotics, pesticides, and artificial dyes.

Is Salmon Good For Dogs?

Yes, salmon is good for dogs. As long as you stick to the safety tips above, high quality wild-caught salmon offers several health benefits for dogs, thanks to its rich nutritional profile.

Here are some advantages of including salmon in your dog's diet:

1. **Excellent Source Of Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Salmon is packed with omega-3 fatty acids, such as EPA and DHA, which are essential for your dog's overall health. These fatty acids support brain function, joint health, and can even improve the condition of your pup's skin and coat.

2. **High-Quality Protein:** Protein is an essential nutrient for dogs, and salmon is a high-quality source. Quality digestible protein aids in muscle development, repair, and maintenance, supporting your dog's overall strength and vitality.

3. **Essential Vitamins And Minerals:** Salmon contains various vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D, vitamin B12, selenium, and potassium. These nutrients contribute to a strong immune system, healthy bones, and proper cellular function.

4. **Supports Heart Health:** The omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon have been linked to promoting cardiovascular health. They can help support a normal inflammatory response as well as promoting normal blood pressure and circulatory function.

What Salmon Is Best For Dogs?

As mentioned earlier, wild-caught salmon is much better for your dog than farm-raised alternatives. But salmon is also prepared in many different ways, and these different kinds of salmon also have different nutritional implications.

In other words, when it comes to feeding salmon to your dog, there are a few different kinds to consider. Let's take a closer look at each of them.

Can Dogs Have Raw Salmon?

Raw salmon carries a higher risk of containing parasites or bacteria, such as salmonella. It's fine to feed salmon raw as long as you've frozen it appropriately. The FDA states that the guidelines below are sufficient to kill parasites.

- Freezing and storing at an ambient temperature of -4°F (-20°C) or below for 7 days (total time)
- Freezing at an ambient temperature of -31°F (-35°C) or below until solid and storing at an ambient temperature of -31°F (-35°C) or below for 15 hours
- Freezing at an ambient temperature of -31°F (-35°C) or below until solid and storing at an ambient temperature of -4°F (-20°C) or below for 24 hours

Can Dogs Have Cooked Salmon?

Cooked salmon is a safe option for dogs, as it eliminates the risk of parasites and harmful bacteria. Ensure that the salmon is properly cooked, with minimal seasonings, and bones removed, with or without skin (see Caution below).

Caution: Most dogs love salmon skin, and it's okay to share occasionally … but keep in mind that toxins are stored in fat, which lies right under the skin.

Can Dogs Have Fresh Salmon?

Yes, dogs can have fresh salmon as long as it's properly cooked and prepared. Fresh salmon provides a good source of protein and beneficial omega-3 fatty acids. But it's best to ensure that the fresh salmon is thoroughly cooked to eliminate risk of parasites or bacteria.

Can Dogs Have Baked Salmon?

Yes, dogs can have baked salmon as long as it is cooked without added seasonings or ingredients that may be harmful to them. Baking salmon is a healthy cooking method that retains its nutritional value. Remove any visible bones before serving it to your dog, as they can pose a choking hazard.

Can Dogs Have Canned Salmon?

Canned salmon can be a convenient option, but make sure to choose varieties that are free from added salt, seasonings, or preservatives. Opt for salmon canned in water rather than oil to avoid excess fat content. Salmon packed in olive oil is fine in theory, but most olive oils used in canned fish are poor quality.

Can Dogs Have Pacific Salmon?

There are many warnings about radiation in Pacific fish after the Fukushima nuclear disaster. While it's true that salmon and other Pacific fish have been found with traces of radiation in them, the FDA and other authorities claim the levels are negligible and it's safe to eat Pacific salmon. However, in Alaska, some fish, including some types of salmon, have tested positive for levels of cesium and iodine isotopes. So, there's reason for some caution in feeding salmon from some areas.

Is Salmon Skin Good For Dogs?

Some dogs may enjoy the taste and texture of salmon skin, and it's also high in omega-3. But keep in mind that toxins are stored in fat, and there's a lot of fat right under the skin of most fish, including salmon.

How To Feed Your Dog Salmon

Now that we're clear on the benefits of salmon and the best kinds of salmon for dogs, let's look at how to introduce salmon into your dog's diet. In general, it's best to start with small portions and observe your pup's response.

Here are some more specific tips for incorporating salmon:

1. **Moderation is Key:** While salmon offers numerous health benefits, it should be fed in moderation as part of a balanced diet. It shouldn’t make up the majority of your dog’s meals.
2. **Variety and Balance:** To expand on the last point, it’s important to provide a well-rounded diet that includes other protein sources, plus fruits and vegetables. Salmon should be part of a diverse menu to give your dog optimal nutrition.

Is Salmon Good For Dogs? Bottom Line

Bottom line: dogs can enjoy the benefits of salmon when it's prepared and served appropriately.

Cooked salmon without seasoning, bones, or skin can be a nutritious addition to your dog's diet, providing omega-3 fatty acids, protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Just remember to opt for high quality salmon, and feed it safely and in moderation.