

Homemade Chicken Jerky Strips: Chewy Treats for Dogs and Cats

If your dog or cat loves the taste and texture of chicken jerky, don't risk feeding potentially toxic store-bought brands. Making your own at home is incredibly simple using this recipe.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Free-range organic chicken is a protein- and vitamin-rich treat for cats and dogs
- Many pets love the texture of a chewy dehydrated chicken jerky treat
- Store-bought chicken jerky, especially brands sourced from China, have been implicated in a shocking number of pet illnesses and deaths, so it's best to make your own at home

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published October 15, 2015.

Free-range, organic chicken is one of the healthiest treats you can feed your dog or cat. Packed with species-appropriate protein, B-vitamins, sulfur-containing amino acids, and minerals, chicken can give your four-legged family member extra strength and energy. Plus, most dogs and cats love the taste and aroma of this all-natural treat.

Because chicken is so healthy, you may have considered picking up a package of store-bought chicken jerky treats. They're chewy in texture and last longer than cooked chicken, making them a favorite for many pets and pet owners alike.

However, store-bought chicken jerky treats, especially brands sourced from China, have been implicated in a shocking number of dog deaths and even the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned dog owners of their link to illnesses.¹

Purchasing store-bought versions is simply not worth the risk to your pet's health, especially when making a homemade version is incredibly simple. All you need is a basic dehydrator and a package of free-range organic chicken breasts to make homemade chicken jerky your pets will crave.

Homemade Chicken Jerky Recipe

Ingredients:

- Free-range organic chicken breasts

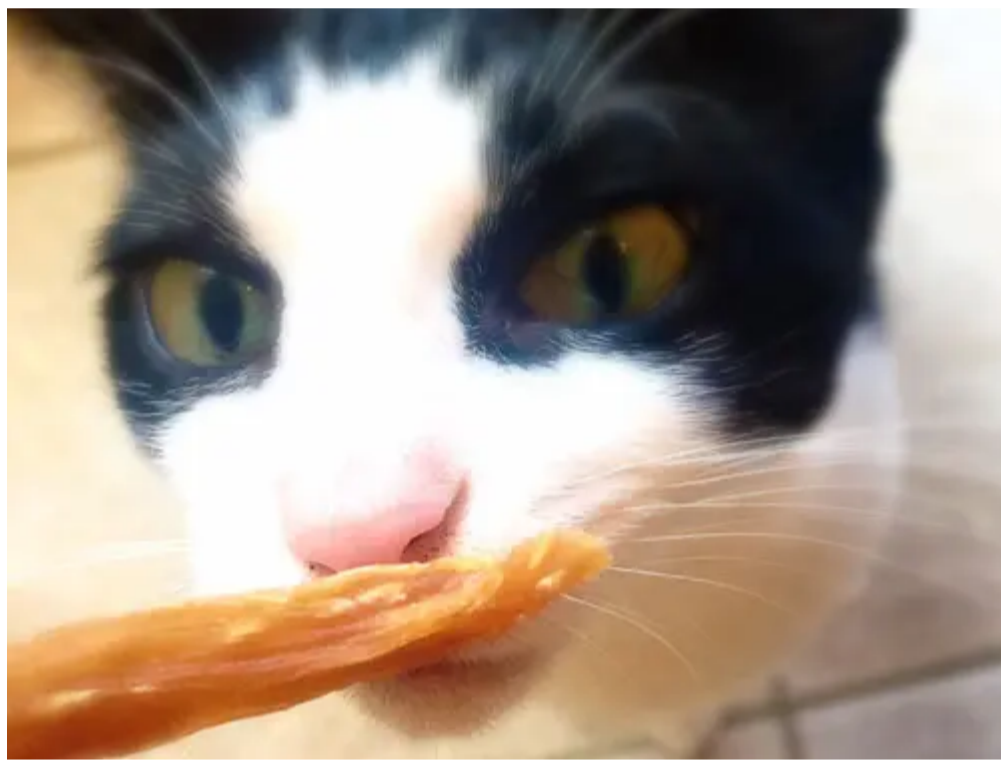
Directions:

1. Slice chicken breasts into 1/2-inch strips and place on dehydrator tray.
2. Dehydrate at 145 degrees F for two hours.
3. Reduce temperature to 120 degrees F for another 4 hours or until meat is thoroughly dry.
4. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.









More Than 1,000 Dog Deaths Linked to Toxic Jerky Treats

You can see from the recipe above how simple it is to make chicken jerky at home, so please don't risk your pet's health with imported jerky treats from China. Since 2007, the FDA has received about 5,000 complaints of pet illnesses (along with 25 illnesses in cats and three in humans) linked to toxic jerky treats, including more than 1,000 dog deaths.^{2,3} According to the FDA:

"Although it is impossible to determine in every case whether the events reported were in fact caused by eating jerky pet treats, FDA continues to believe that there is an association between some of the reports and consumption of jerky pet treats."

Most often, dogs became sick after consuming chicken, duck, or sweet potato jerky treats from China, although even treats labeled "Made in the USA" may contain ingredients sourced from China (or other countries).

The most common symptoms were gastrointestinal or liver disease, followed by kidney and urinary disease. In about 15% of the kidney and urinary disease cases, a rare kidney disease called Fanconi syndrome was reported. Symptoms that occurred less often (in about 10% of cases) included neurologic, dermatologic, and immunologic symptoms.⁴

Despite conducting “extensive chemical and microbial testing,” the FDA has yet to identify any contaminants in jerky treats tested, however they continue to receive complaints of dogs getting sick after eating such treats.

I recommend avoiding store-bought jerky treats for your pets until this “mystery” is solved, and this includes those imported from China and even those that say they are made in the USA. US country of origin labeling laws only require that products “made in the US” be put together here.

There’s no requirement for pet food manufacturers to identify where the ingredients in their products come from. So unless you have contacted the manufacturer and confirmed the product is truly sourced and made from US ingredients, avoid feeding them to your pets. Instead, make your own at home (and while you have the dehydrator out, try your hand at these homemade dehydrated liver chunks, too).

Finally, if you're looking for even more homemade treat recipes, check out my new book, "**The Forever Dog Life.**" This book is filled with over 120 homemade recipes, longevity tips, and new science for better bowls and healthier homes.

Sources and References

¹ [US FDA, Caution to Dog Owners About Chicken Jerky Products \(Archived\)](#).

^{2,4} [Fox News May 19, 2014 \(Archived\)](#).

³ [US FDA, Jerky Pet Treats \(Archived\)](#).
