

# This Fruit Fuels Healthy Cells and Brain Power

The perfect summertime snack, this juicy fruit symbolizes immortality in Daoist mythology. Not surprisingly, it's an excellent source of bioactive compounds that may help protect your pet against chronic diseases, including tumors and heart disease.

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)



## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Peaches contain phenolic compounds with antioxidant capacity, protecting your pet's cells against free radicals
- Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), a type of catechin found in peaches, has also been found to exhibit neuroprotective effects in animal studies, which may help lower your pet's risk for cognitive dysfunction
- Peaches are included in the Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen list, so to lower your pet's exposure to pesticides and other harmful chemicals, always choose organic varieties

**Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published March 9, 2021.**

Best known as a summertime fruit, peaches (*Prunus persica* L.) are a juicy and healthful fruit that you can share with your pet. Read on to learn more about the nutrients your pet may obtain from peaches and what you need to keep in mind when feeding them this fruit.

## Quick Facts on Peaches

Peaches are believed to have existed even before humans did.<sup>1</sup> However, its earliest recorded use dates back to 8000 B.P. in China, where it was considered an important fruit that symbolized immortality in Daoist mythology<sup>2</sup> and love in feng shui.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, peaches remain one of the most popular stone fruits, best enjoyed during the summer as a juicy snack.<sup>4</sup>

Over the years, pet parents have also started sharing peaches with their animal companions, letting them enjoy not just its juicy goodness but also its beneficial nutritional content. Peaches come in white and yellow varieties, with a fuzzy surface that can be easily removed by rubbing the fruit with a paper towel. In this article, we'll discuss the nutritional content of yellow peaches (the most common type).<sup>5</sup>



### Did You Know?

Peaches and nectarines are almost genetically identical, so it's understandable if you confuse them for each other. The main difference between these two fruits is that peaches have a fuzzy coating whereas nectarines have a smooth skin. Although nectarines tend to be sweeter and more aromatic than peaches, they both have a similar flavor profile and can be used interchangeably in recipes.<sup>6</sup>



# Peaches Are an Excellent Source of Bioactive Compounds

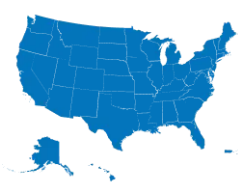
*"Although dogs are scavenging carnivores, they may still enjoy consuming a variety of fresh fruits and veggies, including peaches."*

Peaches contain phytonutrients, flavonoids and antioxidants that are readily passed up the food chain. A study published in the International Journal of Molecular Sciences identified a variety of phenolic compounds with antioxidant capacity in peaches and found that the predominant compounds are chlorogenic acid and catechins. These antioxidants may help protect your pet's cells against free radicals that can cause chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease.<sup>7</sup>

Chlorogenic acid has also been found to possess antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antilipidemic and antidiabetic properties.<sup>8,9</sup> Moreover, an animal study published in the Food and Chemical Toxicology journal showed that chlorogenic acid may contribute to lower levels of insulin, plasma leptin, triglycerides and cholesterol, while also helping decrease body weight and visceral fat mass.<sup>10</sup>

Another study published in the journal Molecules stated that chlorogenic acid has "beneficial effects against diabetes in animals regarding blood glucose levels, lipid metabolism, cataracts, and wound-healing."<sup>11</sup> Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), a type of catechin found in peaches,<sup>12</sup> has also been found to exhibit neuroprotective effects in animal studies, which may help lower your pet's risk for cognitive dysfunction.<sup>13</sup>

## Where Can You Find Peaches?



Peaches were likely domesticated in northwest China before spreading westward and eventually being introduced to North America by Spanish monks in the mid-1500s.<sup>14</sup> Today, China remains the top peach-producing country, followed by the European Union.<sup>15</sup> In the U.S., these fruits are commercially grown in 20 states, with the top producers being California, South Carolina, Georgia and New Jersey.<sup>16</sup>



## Peaches Can Give Your Pet These Beneficial Vitamins

The flesh of a peach contains health-promoting vitamins, particularly vitamins A and C. A 1-tablespoon serving of peaches contains 1.53 micrograms of vitamin A,<sup>17</sup> a nutrient that may help support your pet's eye health, bone growth, immune response and reproductive system.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, your pet may get 0.625 milligrams of vitamin C per 1-tablespoon serving of peaches.<sup>19</sup> This vitamin may help scavenge reactive oxygen species (ROS), protecting your pet's DNA, proteins and lipids against oxidative damage.<sup>20</sup>

## Dietary Fiber in Peaches May Be Good for Pets

Peaches also provide your pet 0.14 grams of dietary fiber per 1-tablespoon serving.<sup>21</sup> Fiber plays an important role in your pet's digestive process. It helps keep their gut microbiome healthy, which in turn helps optimize their immune health.<sup>22</sup>



## Peach Fun Facts

Peach fuzz is believed to be the fruit's defense mechanism. It keeps moisture away from its delicate skin, preventing it from rotting prematurely. It's also believed to deter insects that may eat the fruit or lay their eggs on its surface.<sup>23</sup>



## Let's Set the Record Straight About Peach Toxicity

Peaches have been linked to toxicity in animal companions. Even the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) classifies this fruit as toxic to cats and dogs.<sup>24</sup> However, this is a misunderstanding.

The flesh of the peach fruit, which is the part you should be feeding your pet, is safe for their consumption. In fact, serving small pieces of peaches as a treat or as an addition to a nutritionally adequate, species-appropriate diet can be good for your animal companion.

Misinformation about many healthy fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds abounds on the internet. This is because websites have labeled all risks (such as the risk of over-consumption causing gastrointestinal issues, or choking on too large of pieces or pits) as "toxicities," which isn't true but has managed to confuse millions of pet lovers, nonetheless.

If you're wondering how the misconception about peaches' toxicity to pets came about, it's most likely caused by the amygdalin content of the fruit's pit. Amygdalin is a sugar-cyanide compound that can indeed be toxic when consumed in high amounts.<sup>25</sup> But the good news is that even a small dog would have to consume multiple peach pits for them to be affected (and they shouldn't be consuming the pit at all).

Always use common sense when feeding peaches to your animal companion. Obviously, it's important to remove the pit prior to offering peach slices to your pet. Since amygdalin is also found in the leaves and stems of the peach tree, you should keep your pet away from the plant if you have one in your garden.<sup>26</sup>

## How to Safely Offer Peaches to Your Pet

As mentioned above, peaches should be pitted before being fed to your pet. Whole peaches can be a choking hazard, with a pit that has an abrasive surface that may irritate your pet's digestive tract, if swallowed. If you're going to let your pet snack on peaches, make sure you give it to them in small cut-up pieces. You should also avoid feeding them canned or preserved peaches, as they usually contain preservatives and are high in sugar.<sup>27,28</sup>

Keep in mind that fresh fruits are simply "extras" in your pet's nutritionally adequate, species-appropriate diet. Healthy treats should comprise less than 10% of your pet's daily caloric intake.

## Choose Organic Peaches for Your Pets

Peaches are included in the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) 2020 Dirty Dozen list,<sup>29</sup> so make sure you shop smart when buying peaches.

To lower your pet's exposure to pesticides and other harmful chemicals in conventionally grown peaches, always choose organic. Buy fruits and vegetables from local farmers, so you'll be able to ask them directly about the agricultural practices they use for growing their crops.

## Sources and References

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