

## Instinct™ Chicken Meal Formula kibble for dogs – Questions & Answers

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Q: What is the issue?

A: *Recently, some of our pet parents who are feeding Instinct Chicken Meal Formula grain-free kibble for dogs have reported loose stools and occasional vomiting.*

Q: What product is affected?

A: *Two batches of Instinct Chicken Meal Formula kibble for dogs – only those bags with “best if used by” dates of January 3, 2009 and January 10, 2009. Sizes could include 4.4 lb, 13.2 lb, and 25.3 lb bags.*

Q: What is being done in terms of quality control to assure this won't happen again?

A: *We are taking any and all necessary steps to assure the quality of our products. In response to this situation, we have implemented the following:*

- *Suspended production at our secondary kibble production facility and will not resume there until production standards meet the quality we demand;*
- *Increased the frequency of testing of our products in our warehouse before they ship;*
- *Hired an additional quality control manager with 25 years of experience who will implement new quality control protocol and reporting requirements at our co-packers*

Q: What caused the misstep in manufacturing?

A: *Because Nature's Variety kibble has a much higher natural meat content, a benefit we are extremely proud of, it is more difficult to produce our kibble. This particular production facility was new to our specialized manufacturing processes, resulting in two batches of more nutrient-dense kibble.*

Q: Has the formulation changed?

A: *No, our Instinct chicken kibble formulation has not changed.*

Q: Why is this digestive upset happening?

A: *In essence, the two affected production batches of food are more nutrient-dense relative to our regular production batches. In other words, the Instinct chicken kibble produced on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> is a richer food than your dog is accustomed to, which may cause some digestive upset, similar to transitioning diets.*

Q: Why was this problem not identified before the product entered the marketplace?

A: *Due to our continued strong growth in sales, we have recently added an additional kibble manufacturing facility. While we continue to manufacture Instinct Chicken Meal Formula kibble for dogs at our previous facility, the two affected batches were produced at the new facility during a time of strong product demand. The food passed our initial inspections, though it was near the high end of our target density range. Our previous manufacturer's product was near the low end of the acceptable density range. That spread caused digestive upset in some dogs, but we were not made aware of the issue until we began receiving reports from our pet parents. After diligently investigating the situation, we traced the issue to the change in density.*

Q: Is this product still being sold?

A: *No, we have asked our distributor and retailer partners to stop selling the affected product.*

Q: If the product was produced in early January, why was I not told sooner?

A: *Even though the food was made in early January, it generally takes several weeks for our products to reach your retail store shelf. Once Nature's Variety received reports from our customers indicating a potential problem, we immediately investigated the situation to better understand why some dogs were having digestive upset. We followed with testing and verified that the cause of the digestive upset was density-related. Now we are taking steps to make sure our customers are aware of the two affected production batches.*

Q: What should I do if my dog experiences digestive upset?

A: *You can return the product to your local retail store for a replacement or refund. We have no reason to believe that the cause of the digestive upset is anything other than the equivalent of transitioning to a new diet. So, any symptoms should subside within a few days at the most. If the symptoms persist, however, see your veterinarian.*

Q: I empty my pet food into a storage container and discard the bag. How do I know whether my bag of Instinct Chicken Meal Formula kibble for dogs was affected?

A: *If you feed Instinct Chicken Meal Formula for dogs and are concerned that your product is causing digestive upset, please do not hesitate to bring your receipt back to your local retail store for a replacement or refund. We want you to be confident in feeding a product you can trust.*

Q: I was told that I could use probiotics as a supplement to help in stabilizing my dog's digestive system. Is that true, and would you recommend it?

A: *Probiotics are a safe supplement and would likely help to resolve this digestive upset. However, in this situation, we would suggest returning the product to your local store for a refund or replacement.*

Q: I was told that if I lessen the amount of food fed each day, the dog's digestive system will adjust. Is that true, and would you recommend it?

A: *Yes, that is very likely to be true, as the higher density means you are feeding more weight per cup. However, in this situation, we would suggest returning the product to your local store for a refund or replacement.*

Q: If your kibble is made at a different facility, how do you guarantee product quality?

A: *In order to make our proprietary and innovative diets, we partner with high quality manufacturers that share our passion for safety and ingredient integrity. Our team is dedicated to developing and enforcing our quality control standards – including ingredient specifications, sourcing certifications, testing, and product safety. On-site inspections and continuous monitoring are some of the steps we take to insure product quality. You can be assured that our team is strongly committed to providing safe and nutritious foods for your special pets.*