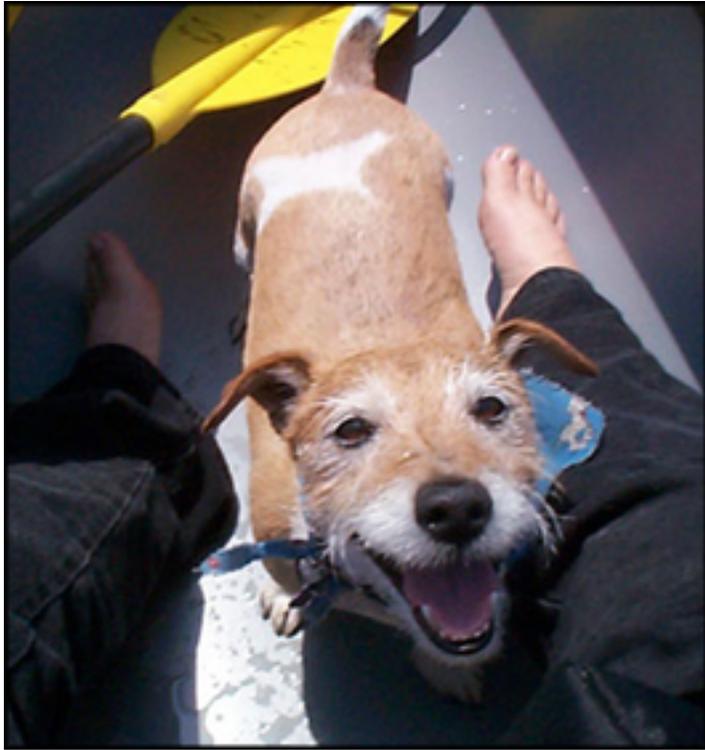




# **Keeping Nik Healthy**

By Pippin Lowe

In general I'm just a normal dog owner. I play with them, feed them, pet them and take them to the vet once in awhile. I expect this is all they need, and for years it usually is. But when Nik was 11 years old I realized his health was beginning to deteriorate. Both his skin and breath stunk, he had little energy, and worst of all was always breaking wind.



Realizing these were signs of bad digestion I decided to try an experiment on him. My idea was so successful I only ended it when he died. What I did for Nik stopped both the skin odor and his passing of gas. The bad breath, well curing two out of three horrible odors is acceptable. By now I'm sure you've guessed I changed his diet, and he loved the change.

What I did was easy to do, easy to maintain, and easy on my pocket book. Instead of feeding him soft dog food I made a large bowl with equal portions of mixed vegetables, brown rice and meat parts. Jack Russell Terriers are small dogs and eat little compared to many other dogs. So I didn't have to mix

this up every day.

This combination of food caused a remarkable improvement in his health. I have no scientific proof as to why it helped, but the fact a human could have eaten it might have something to do with Nik's progress.

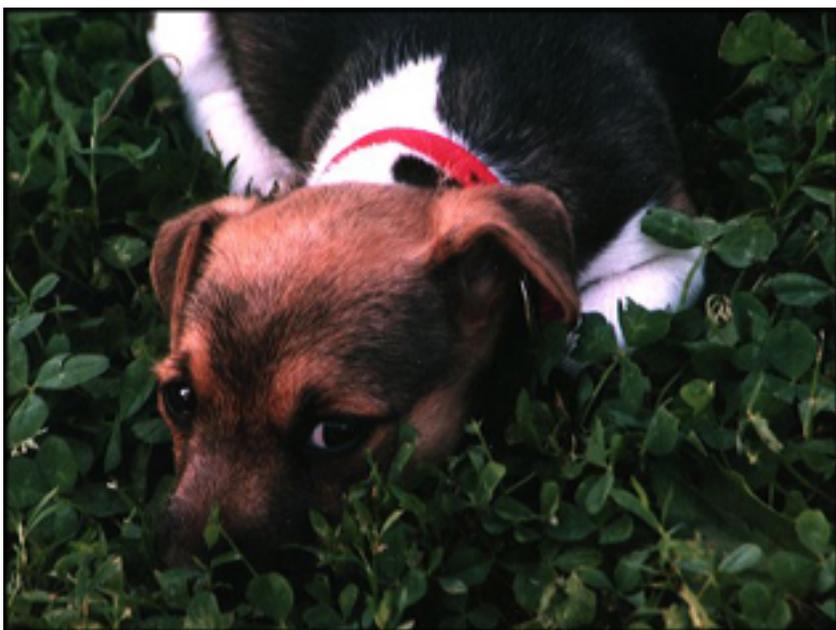
In order to maintain this routine I made it as easy as I could on me. About every six weeks I would cook up a pot of brown rice then divide it up into half baggie sized portions and freeze the baggies. Generally a pot of rice would make eight to ten portions.

For the greens I bought the cheapest brand of canned mixed vegetables. Usually this was the store brand. I always drained the vegetables so the rest of the food didn't get soggy. Sometimes instead of the mixed vegetables I put in canned green beans or corn. If I had leftovers from my own meals, like baked potatoes, I'd give him that. Nik loved all the vegetables I fed him.

The meat parts often consisted of chicken skin, beef fat and other fragments of meat. Of course Nik would have loved to only be fed this, but if anything I put in a smaller portion of meat than any other part of the formula. I never fed Nik raw meat, but that was just my personal preference. Also I often put in a bit more brown rice than either vegetables or meat. Some weeks I put in hard boiled eggs or cheese pieces instead of meat. I just made sure it was a protein.

This formula stays fresh in the refrigerator for at least five days. Of course dogs eat garbage and pig ears, so week-old human food is probably just starting to smell interesting to them. Anyway Nik always looked forward to this daily meal.

Although I had to do some work in preparing Nik's food, it actually cost less than the canned food I had been feeding him. In the beginning he always thought he was getting a special treat, but it didn't take him long to start expecting the human food. When we went on weekend trips out of town I had to feed him canned food again. He would look at the dog food in his bowl, and then at me in disgust, and finally after minutes of pouting he would eat it. However, I usually was the one who suffered a few hours later. Nik may have been a little dog, but his intestinal gases had a humongous odor.



The recipe is as follows:

1/3 portion of meats parts (protein)

1/3 portion of cooked brown rice

1/3 portion of drained canned mixed vegetables

Mix together and feed as you think needed. Nik was fed this formula in the morning. He also had hard food available for him.

When it came time to finally saying goodbye to Nik I was understandably sad, but mostly I felt fortunate we had spent 15 great years together. Dogs are wonderful buddies and I

was happy that with a little work and TLC I was able to keep him healthy through most of his old age.