



THE NUTRITION EDITIONS

What's the deal with chelated minerals? *What are they? And does your pet need them?*

Pronounced “key-lated,” chelated minerals are becoming a more common ingredient in pet foods. Minerals that are chelated are connected to an organic molecule, such as an amino acid or protein. This chemical arrangement prevents interactions that can render the nutrient useless—therefore enabling better absorption.

But does your pet need them? The answer may depend on several factors, such as the following:

- **Minerals in Drinking Water**—If your water has high levels of iron, it can reduce the utilization of dietary copper and zinc. High levels of sulfur can affect the use of copper. Inorganic forms of zinc and copper cannot overcome the effects of high iron or sulfur in drinking water. Chelated minerals, however, are less likely to react with minerals in water.
- **Bone Growth**—Developing bones need a variety of nutrients, including an assortment of minerals. Because bones do not have an extensive circulatory system, a balanced diet with highly usable nutrients is essential to assure bones receive proper levels.
- **Disease and Infections**—A pet's immune system uses vast amounts of nutrients. Research shows that animals fed chelated minerals have immune systems that respond more vigorously to pathogenic challenges than those not given chelated minerals.
- **Breeding**—Larger litters, improved conception and stronger estrus have been shown to be associated with feeding chelated minerals.
- **Stress**—Research shows that chelated minerals are beneficial to maintaining the performance of animals under stressful conditions.
- **Tissue Repair**—Minerals are essential for the repair of damaged tissues, which may not have extensive circulatory systems that provide a consistent supply of nutrients. Chelated minerals have been shown to aid in the rapid repair of these tissues.
- **Allergies**—Immune systems stressed by allergies may need more nutrients than animals normally require. The higher availability of chelated minerals keeps these nutrients at levels enabling proper functions.
- **Genetics**—A certain level of a mineral for one breed can be deficient or even toxic for others. Chelated minerals are handled better by animals than inorganic forms and are more suitable to meet the nutrient needs of all breeds.
- **Digestive Upsets**—Digestive problems or disorders can decrease the effectiveness of nutrients. Chelated minerals, however, are utilized better than other sources of minerals and thus can benefit animals suffering from digestive ailments.
- **Dietary Substances**—Mineral supplements can create more harm than good if they are not compatible with the basic food. Excessive amounts of treats, for example can cause imbalances. Chelated minerals are more forgiving of mistakes.

Chelated minerals are a good way to insure that animals can receive the proper levels of valuable dietary minerals under situations that are not ideal.