

The Complete Guide To Your Dog's Nutrition



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INTRODUCTION

Your dog is your best friend and life long companion so it makes sense that you would want to feed him/her the best food available. It is simply not enough to buy random bags of dog food and just hope that the contents agree with your dog. The fact is that dogs, like humans, often require special diets in order to keep them happy and healthy. And also like us, nutritional guidelines and requirements must be followed.

This book is to help guide those who may otherwise be unaware of what exactly their dog needs when it comes to diet and nutrition. The sections following will hold some valuable information along with advice and statistics about the 12 best commercial brand dog foods.

The first part of the book will elaborate on the basic needs of a dog's diet, along with how to choose the right food, the best foods on the market, and the issue of homemade foods. We will also review the best way to change diets as to reduce any adverse effects.

The second section will be of interest to anyone with a dog that may have special feeding requirements, or those dogs that need a particular diet. Additives and snacks will also be discussed.

One of the most important sections is the last. Discussion about common health problems in diets for dogs along with any food to avoid can be found throughout this section. This can also be a great reference for anyone wanting to solve basic and common dietary problems.

Remember, your dog depends on you for a healthy diet and lifestyle, so it is vital that you take their needs into consideration. This book will shed light on those needs and help guide you to a better dietary choice for your beloved pet.

SECTION 1

DOG DIET AND NUTRITION

1

DOG DIET AND NUTRITION BASICS

The question of what to feed your dog is a sensitive one as there are many different camps advocating many different ideas, facts, and theories. For many owners, the question is solved by finances. To put it simply, if the owner can afford the dog food then that type and brand is going to go into the food bowl. While this approach may seem sensible, especially when the monthly budget is taken into consideration, it may not be best. Why feed the dog sub-par ingredients and face vet bills later on that may have been avoided in the first place by choosing the right food?

The right kind of diet, complete with needed nutrition, will have a variety of benefits such as boosting the immune system and fighting off certain ailments. First, let us take a look at what is available on the market compared with the other options.

The dog foods found on most grocery store shelves, the generic or store brand ones, are not usually considered among the best foods for your pet. More often than not, these brands are full of ingredients that are lower in quality and inexpensive. While these brands provide a cheaper alternative to the other brands, they are generally not recommended. A quick glance at the ingredients can provide an example of lower quality food.

Generic meat ingredients without a specific species named is not a good thing to feed a dog. Avoid phrases such as "meat byproducts" or "meat and bone meal". Look for brands that can list the animal that they use as an ingredient, like "chicken meal" or "beef". Also, avoid any brands that list corn as their main ingredient. You are feeding a dog, after all, and not a pig or a cow.

Other ingredients that are commonly found in food bowls across the nation and the world are, frankly, disgusting. Unlike human grade meat products, dogs do not get the choice muscles. In fact, they get whatever is left. This means bones, skin, lungs, and other grotesque bits and pieces that no human would ever think of feeding to a dog in its pure form. All of this is rendered along with other waste and packaged as the generically phrased meat and bone meal mentioned above. Along with these byproducts, some of the cattle that we feed our dogs are unfit for the human market. The "Four D's" is the colorful phrase used to describe this grade of cattle: Dead, Dying, Diseased, or Disabled. These are the kinds of ingredients that can be found in some of those lower end and cheaper alternatives of dog food.

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A sure fire way to avoid these generic products and ingredients is to buy the Premium and Healthy grades of dog food. Name brands are the best choice. Not only do these higher end brands, which will be discussed at further length a little later on, have products devoid of any byproducts, but they also offer the healthiest choice of carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and other nutrients.

These nutrients are best when provided with a recognizable name and not some chemical number. Avoid obscure listings like potato product, rice or peanut hulls, and grape pomace. Look for something more recognizable than words that give you only a vague notion of what you are feeding your dog.

This all begs the question of how and why dogs are so willing to eat meat byproducts and rice hulls. Simply put, the dogs are tricked. Chemicals are added to create a pleasing color and aroma that will trick the dog into devouring the food. These chemicals are easy enough to spot if you know what to look for. Coloring agents, drying agents, and texturizers are just some of the tell tale ingredients that should cause you to sit up and take notice.

The difference in the quality between low and high grade pet foods has come to the attention to many owners recently. In the early part of 2007, massive recalls of dog and cat foods were ordered after the deaths of numerous pets. This has given rise to many owners being more critical at what, exactly, is in their pet's bowl. Of course, this does not illustrate the everyday problems that remain even after those recalls and changes.

Many of the recalls were traced to chemicals added into the pet food due to 'accidental contamination' or oversight. There still remains chemicals and product present in pet food that can be harmful and detrimental to the overall health of the pet. Diligence is required in avoiding these foods as many of them are masked with euphemisms and phrases such as "Moist, chewy" or "contains vegetables", among many more.

Of course, recalls are inevitable from time to time and while it should be avoided in an ideal universe, there will continue to be pet food of inferior quality that will be the subject of such recalls.

Listed below are just some of the recalled brands of Pet Foods:

Doane Pet Care recalled a million bags of dry dog food that was contaminated with aflatoxin. This included the Wal-Mart brand of Ol' Roy and was a corn-based dry food.

In the early part of 2008, Menu Foods recalled a brand of food that was sold in Publix Super Markets.

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During the same time, Winn-Dixie Super Markets pulled cans of dog food due to a contamination. Of course, there are those countless reports of sick dogs and cats, most of which died due to the recalls of pet food. These recalls will continue due to the fact that there are companies either oblivious or callous to the fact that rendering plants are using sub-par ingredients that are harmful and deadly to pets.

So, what does all this say about the food you should be feeding your dog? The only conclusion that can be drawn is that if you pay for higher quality food, the better your chances are of receiving a better product. While this does not guarantee the continued health of your pet due to other variables such as environmental factors, this will help ensure that your dog is eating the best possible food available. This means buying the premium brands like Iams or Purina in order for the continued health and longevity of your dog.

DOG NUTRITION BASICS

Let's break down what makes a dog food a good one and talk a little about topics that many probably thought were exclusive to humans. The basics of a dog's nutrition are similar to that of their owners and include paying attention to factors like protein, carbohydrates, fats, as well as calories. Some of us may already be familiar with what these are and how they affect the body. But do you know what roles they play in your dog?

It is said that dogs are carnivores, and with this in mind, many owners do not see the need to feed their pet anything but raw meat. While wolves, wild dogs, and feral dogs are primarily meat eaters, they need other nutrients in their diet which they gain in other ways. Domestic dogs need special care and attention where their diet and nutrition is concerned. This is a responsibility that falls to their owners, so being knowledgeable is important in order to provide the pets with the healthiest options available.

First, we will look at the role protein plays in a dog's diet.

PROTEIN

Protein is a very important part of any diet as it allows the continued growth and development of several key systems such as the immune system. Amino acids are ingested as protein and the key element to this nutrient. A deficiency in any of the amino acids can result in illness and death. Dogs need up to 22 amino acids, 12 of which they are able to produce on their own. It is up to the owner to provide, through a healthy diet and with the proper food, the remaining amino acids. These essential amino acids (arginine,

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histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine) are necessary to the health of your pet.

It is not enough that the dog food you buy has some protein source. The quality of the protein needs to be taken into consideration in order to ensure that the dog is receiving the amount needed and that those proteins can be used by the animal. The quality of protein is referred to as the biological value, with an egg as the highest at 100.

To put this in perspective, beef has a 78 in biological value with meat and bone meal at 50. With this in mind, it is safe to say that food with beef as opposed to the vague meat and bone meal is better in protein quality and will be able to provide more amino acids that the dog needs and can use. Now, remember that the lower quality dog food is responsible for such items as that meat and bone meal, while Premium dog foods boast beef and other pure proteins.

Of course, dogs with special protein requirements will require different food, but on average, the Premium brands of dog food will be the ones with the better protein quality.

CARBOHYDRATES

Recent diet trends tell us that watching "carbs" is the surest way to a slimmer figure and a healthy body, but does this claim translate to our dogs? In nature, dogs ingest very little carbohydrates and what they do receive is from berries and whatever happens to be in the digestive system of their prey. On this diet, these dogs only receive a meager amount of carbohydrates compared to the much larger amount found in the food we feed their domesticated cousins.

Dogs are able to convert large amounts of carbohydrates into the same kind of energy they receive from proteins. When in the form of digestible carbohydrates, a healthy diet high in carbs is not necessarily a bad thing. Since dogs are unable to meet the protein requirements of wild canines, substituting energy requirements with the use of carbohydrates is a healthy alternative.

Aside from the benefit to the dog, having a higher carbohydrate count also benefits the manufacturer, which in turn helps out the consumer. Carbohydrates are easily found whereas protein is not and, of course, the costs for carbohydrates are significantly less. Also important is that the texture and shape of dry dog food is created from these carbohydrates. Without these carbs, dry dog food would be impossible.

Now, receiving such a large amount of carbohydrates in the dog's diet is simply not natural in the wild; there are some health concerns for

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domesticated dogs. The most noticeable concern is obesity. Carbohydrates give the dog energy, but if that energy is not expended, the remainder of those carbs are then stored as fat. While an excess of anything can lead to weight gain and obesity, an excess of carbohydrates seems to be the leading culprit. So, it is important to make certain that your pet is receiving enough exercise to burn off the excess carbohydrates.

Indigestion is another result of too many carbs. Symptoms of this condition can include but are not limited to bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Dogs lacking certain enzymes needed to break down carbs may require supplements to help tolerate the carbohydrates.

Overall, carbohydrates are an important part of the dog's diet as they provide needed calories. While not present in such large amounts in the wild, with the careful balance that is often found in Premium foods and a healthy lifestyle, there should not be any problems.

FATS

This word immediately invokes a strong gasp from many of us who are watching our weight or who believe that fatty foods are something to be avoided at all costs. Really, fats in food, both for humans and dogs, are a needed nutrient for continued health. Dogs benefit from fats that can be found in their food, as long as they are the right type and the dog receives enough exercise.

Fats play a key role in several aspects of the dog's diet and health. They...

- Allow the dog to store food.
- Increase the palatability of the food
- Help the skin to remain healthy
- Keep the coat healthy
- Help with kidney function
- Assist in temperature regulation

Suffice it to say, dogs need a certain amount of fats in their diet. The fatty acids that make up dietary fats include arachidonic, linolenic, and linoleic. When looking for foods with fatty acids, vegetable oils that can be found through soy, peanuts, and corn are all high in linoleic acid, while meat fats contain small amounts of this acid, along with arachidonic acid. Fats from certain kinds of vitamins such as F, D, E, A, and K help with hormones and

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Omega 3 and Omega 6 help with the body's response to swelling, and inflammation.

Non-specific fat sources are not preferred as they may not meet the dietary requirements. Also generic fish oil should be avoided. Fish oil can be used as a supplement, however, but not in a generic form.

Ideally, dry dog food needs 5% to 13% fat. This will vary due to the type of food and any specialized conditions and feeding requirements.

Fats in dog food can be harmful if the pet is not receiving enough exercise since fats do contain twice the calories or both carbohydrates and protein. However, this does not mean that fat free dog food is a healthy alternative. While most dogs are overfed, this is more due to a lack of exercise than to the fat content of their food. Fat free dog food will rob the dog of the benefits of a healthy amount of fat. While there are Lite choices in dog foods, any change such as that needs to be discussed with a veterinarian.

Premium dog foods are often the ones with the purest form of Fats and fatty acids, unlike some of the other commercially available foods.

CALORIES

Now, calories play an important role in a dog's diet. A calorie is used to measure energy. Calories are gained from food intake through protein, carbohydrates, and fats, and should be taken with seriousness as it can determine how healthy your dog is. Calories fall into two categories: the gram calorie and the kilogram calorie.

Dogs require a certain amount of calorie intake daily. The amount of the intake depends heavily on the type of dog and its living situation. A dog that is more active will require more calories and an inactive dog will need less. The flip side of this is that those inactive dogs also tend to be the overweight ones.

Active dogs are able to burn calories much faster than those that are inactive. Puppies and younger dogs will also need more calories; often, up to twice the requirement for their body weight. If the calorie intake is more than the rate that the dog can burn them at, then those calories will be stored as fat and result in an obese dog. It is important to exercise your dog along with providing the best diet possible.

Here is a general guideline to determine how many calories your dog may need.

Small dogs who are generally active and who weigh less than 20 pounds (9.07 kg) will need around 40 calories per pound each day.

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Larger dogs over 100 pounds (45.36 kg) will use 15 calories per pound daily.

The rule of thumb is this: a dog will need 25 calories per pound each day to maintain a healthy weight.

Calories gained from refined sugar like corn syrup should be avoided as this provides calories that are harder to burn. These refined sugars are usually found in the lower quality dog foods. The right kind of "sugar" type calories can be gained from plant products such as cereals. Premium dog foods seem to be the best source of these calories.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT FOOD FOR YOUR DOG

Even with all of this information on nutrients and dietary concerns, it may still seem a bit confusing. Choosing the right dog food to feed your four legged family member is no small task. Luckily, there is an organization that provides uniformed guidelines to regulate both fodder and pet foods served in the United States. The Association of American Feed Control Officials is basically the animal equivalent to the Food and Drug Administration.

THE AAFCO STANDARDS

The responsibility for regulating pet food is in the hands of individual states and that of the U.S Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These agencies use the American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) uniformed guidelines in order to better regulate pet food while using their uniformed label and ingredient description guidelines.

While the AAFCO is not directly responsible for regulation, the USFDA and the USDA take their recommendations and use these as a standard by which to judge and evaluate pet food, and animal feed. Many states have even taken the AAFCO recommendations into law.

When it comes to pet food, the AAFCO has created a uniformed model and definition for the ingredients which provides a common understanding of what is in each serving, including a common labeling procedure. That way there is no confusion and no contradictions between differing brands and types of pet food. This information is provided in an annual publication: the AAFCO Manual.

The AAFCO Manual contains the set of standards that all pet food manufacturers need to follow in order to have approval from this organization.

The AAFCO Statement, also referred to as Nutritional Adequacy, is given to those pet foods that have passed the requirements found in the AAFCO Manual. This statement is required on all pet foods and helps to ensure that the pet food is safe. Of course, many manufacturers such as those common to the Premium foods will make strides to go above and beyond the standards set forth by AAFCO.

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There are generally two types of AAFCO statements:

Pet foods with a statement such as "Tested..." have seen an actual trial with cats or dogs eating the product and receiving positive results.

Those foods with a "Formulated" statement have not seen an actual trial but the product has been manufactured to meet the recommendations and the guideline set forth by AAFCO.

To meet the AAFCO guidelines and to receive the AAFCO Statement, pet foods sold on the market have to be graded and judged before distribution. With AAFCO being the only body to grade and judge the quality of the pet food, it is important to look for the AAFCO statement located on the label.

There are two nutritional profiles used to grade dog food; Adult maintenance and Growth (used for puppies). With these profiles in mind, AAFCO determines the nutrients that are needed for each category. The nutrients must meet standards above the minimum requirement and below the maximum requirement as to avoid deficiencies and over-nutrition respectively. These profiles must be defined on the bag. There is a third profile "Fit for all life stages" which meets stricter requirements and are suitable for both puppies and adults.

The testing protocol that is used by AAFCO has come under fire recently, but the tests used have proven adequate when it comes to determining safe products and products fit for the different nutritional profiles. Dog food manufacturers follow the findings of these tests in order to deliver quality products to the consumer and, of course, to the dogs which benefit from the information and diet that is provided.

AAFCO's tests are among the most trusted and one of the only tests performed on dog food and pet food overall. They have been followed and used as guidelines since the organization's formation in 1909. These protocols are enough to determine which foods go to the market and which foods are unfit to feed to our dogs.

The protocols for testing dog food is as follows:

Eight healthy adult dogs participate in a 26 week feeding trial. Six of those eights are required to complete this trial. So, for half of a year, at least six dogs need to stick to the trial foods. During the trial, dogs are only fed the product being tested and water. This ensures that no other items such as chews or treats interfere with the final result.

At the end of the testing duration, a veterinarian performs a battery of medical tests to assess the dog's healthy status. To pass, a dog must have no clinical signs of nutritional deficiencies or over-nutrition, loss of body weight no greater than 15%, and blood tests meet a specified range for packed cell

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volume, serum alkaline phosphatase, hemoglobin, and serum albumin. If these requirements are met, with six of the eight passing, then the food is allowed on the market with the AAFCO Statement.

Now, the AAFCO tests are for a relatively short amount of time compared to the length of the dog's lifespan. With this in mind, it is important that other factors are taken into account when deciding the best diet for your pet. While the AAFCO tests are important and even vital when choosing dog food, also keep in mind that your dog may have specialized requirements and circumstances that will affect the results. Trial testing in home is also recommended to make certain that your dog is receiving the needed nutrients without the adverse results.

The AAFCO tests do show us the performance of the food being tested, the digestibility of the nutrients in the food and how willing the dogs are to accept the food. When deficiencies are detected in the AAFCO trials, they are able to be corrected and improved, creating a superior product.

It is important to look for the AAFCO statement when purchasing dog food along with quality ingredients which can be found in Premium foods. While lower quality foods, those containing corn based feed, or items like bone and meat meal, may pass these tests, owners must understand that AAFCO needs to make sure lower quality and higher quality dog food are suitable for purchase. Using the AAFCO statement along with better ingredients is a great way of providing the best diet for your dog.

READING A DOG FOOD LABEL

As mentioned earlier, AAFCO has many purposes. Among them is the creation of a uniformed label for dog food. The purpose of a uniformed label is so that manufacturers are able to post relevant information that the consumer will understand.

Of course, not many owners are apt to read the label on the back of the bag. Many us do not even read labels on the foods we eat, so why would we for our pets? The label tells us many important facts and figures that may otherwise dissuade or persuade us from purchasing the food. In short, it is important to read the labels. To actually read that label, and not to just give it a cursory glance, we will have to first know a little something about what can be found there and what it means.

PRODUCT NAME

The first thing most of us notice on any label is the product name. This, to many, is part of being a savvy shopper; to know what we are buying. The product name may also contain primary ingredient names such as "Beef Dog

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Chow", or what kind of dog the food is intended for, such as "Puppies, Adult, Lactating", etc.

If, in the product name, an ingredient is listed, say for example that "Beef Dog Chow", that beef must be at least 95% of the total weight if there is no water required for processing and at least 70% when water is included. So, for dry kibble, 95% of that weight needs to contain beef.

When the title contains words such as "dinner, formula, nuggets", and other words of similar nature the ingredient named must be at least 25% of the weight. So in a product named Lamb Dinner, 25% of the total weight for the product must be lamb.

Of course, manufacturers are going to polish up their product in order to appeal to a greater mass. This is where diligence and observance comes in on the consumer's part; you really have to know what you are buying.

Only ¼ of the entire product needs to consist of those named products so when you have a product such as that Lamb Dinner, the lamb may not be the main ingredient. Ingredients must be listed in a descending order of weight. So, even though the bag says Lamb Dinner, the lamb may be fourth in order.

Example:

Lamb Dinner Ingredients: Corn, meat and bone meal, wheat, lamb.

In that Lamb Dinner, the main ingredients are really the corn and meat and bone meal. Not desirable for a healthy meal.

On the other hand if the ingredients listed were:

Premium Lamb Dinner Ingredients: Lamb, ground rice, ground yellow corn...

This presents a more desirable meal and one that your dog can actually consume and digest properly.

When it comes to the words "flavored" or "flavor" such as Lamb Flavored Nuggets, no exact percentage of the named ingredient, the lamb, needs to be present, but enough of that ingredient needs to present as to be detectable.

Often times, the main ingredients will not be present in the title. In such a case, these foods often include items such as: ground yellow corn, meat byproducts, tallow, and other items that are not particularly digestible for your pet. The actual named ingredient will probably be down the list and make up only a very small part of the product.

Besides naming an ingredient with the product name, other phrases and adjectives are used.

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Premium Dog Food, or X Premium and other like titles are making a justified boast, as these products complied with the nutritional standards for a complete and balanced dog food. This is defiantly something to take into consideration when shopping.

Natural Dog Food means that there are no artificial colors, preservatives or flavors.

If a product has given the calorie content on the bag, "Premium Beef Dinner: now with lower calorie content", this is done so voluntarily as a service to the consumer. Since this is yet to be required, there are some products that do not sport this information. Here is a quick way to figure out the calorie content of dog food:

Multiply the carbohydrate by 4.2kcal (kilocalories) per gram, the protein by 5.65, and then the fat by 9.4 kcal per gram. If you need to convert the kilocalories to kilojoules (another unit of measurement for energy) simply multiply the total by 4.184. Of course, rounding to the nearest ten might be helpful, as long as you keep in mind that it's an approximation erring on the low side.

NET QUANTITY STATEMENT

Basically, the net quantity statement is how much of the product is in the container. There are many regulations stating where this information needs to be displayed and in what format. The quantity statement is used to compare products in order to determine which offers the best value. The problem is that very few consumers bother to look at this statement. Even if they do read the ingredients and other nutritional facts, the net quantity statement goes ignored. The net quantity statement is one of the most important items to consider when comparing products and price.

Just because a product is of smaller quantity does not necessarily mean it is an inferior quality. Dog foods vary in density and certain brands may be more concentrated than others and require less product to feed the pet. When it comes to Lite products, a bag which would hold 30 pounds (13.60 kg) may only hold 25 or less as the Lite dog food is puffed up and much of it is air.

It is recommended that consumers compare dog food products on a cost-per-ounce or even a cost per-pound basis. Also, remember that quality vs quantity is an important indicator when purchasing brands.

If you are comparing the same brand of differing size, but are unsure what to buy in order to save the most, remember that often times the smaller size bags are also the higher price per pound.

Example:

- A 5lb bag costing \$8 costs \$1.60 per pound (0.5 kg).
- A 10lb bag of \$13 will be \$1.30 per pound (0.5 kg).
- A 20lb bag will cost \$21 and be about \$1.05 per pound (0.5 kg).

Concerns about freshness often prevent consumers from buying these large quantity bags but proper storage procedures will keep the product fresher longer. Cool dry places are often recommended and there are vacuum sealers which are easier to use and have a variety of uses besides sealing up the dog food.

MANUFACTURER'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

This seems straightforward enough and in many cases it is. Usually, the statement will be "Manufactured by Awesome Dog Food Inc." or whatever the name of the brand you buy. When statements such as "manufactured for..." or "distributed by..." are on the label, this means that the product was manufactured by an outside source, though the name on the actual label is still responsible for the product.

While some labels will lack the full street address, it will have a city directory or telephone directory as required by law. Most, if not all, pet food and products in general will have toll free numbers which enable consumers to voice concerns and direct inquiries. The toll free number should be used as soon as you have any problems or a question concerning the product as this is often the first line the company has to determine if there is something wrong or that something is in need of improvement.

INGREDIENT LIST

This is often the most misunderstood section of the label, but it is also important that you read the information provided here. First, we must understand a few things about how the ingredient list is set up before delving deeper into what is there and what we can learn.

As mentioned earlier, the ingredients are listed in weight of descending order. So, the most prevalent ingredient is first with the rest following after. This can aid in helping your dog meet any dietary concerns. A dog needing protein should have a food with meat products (not meat byproducts) listed in the top three, while a dog in need of a low protein diet should eat a food with carbohydrates in the top five ingredients.

It is important to keep in mind that the weight used to determine order is before processing. Some manufacturers do use this rule to make their product appear better than it actually is. Splitting ingredients, ingredients

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that retain a lot of water, and other such tricks are used as a way to make their products appear better than others that are actually of higher quality.

A good way to find the higher quality dog foods by reading the ingredient list is to search for that first source of fat. Everything that is listed before that fat source, and including it, is the main part of the food. Everything else is generally used for flavor, preservatives, vitamins, and minerals.

For example:

Food A:

Ground yellow corn, meat meal, *chicken fat*, ground wheat, chicken byproduct meal, dried beet pulp ...

Food B:

Turkey, chicken, chicken meal, ground brown rice, ground white rice, *chicken fat*, apples, carrots, sunflower oil...

The importance of finding the source of fat and where it is listed is so you can find ingredients that may or may not be harmful to your pet, such as beet pulp or corn gluten meal.

Another way that the ingredients list is organized is that the ingredients must be listed by their "common or usual" name as per the AAFCO Manual. This does have the disadvantage of being manipulated by some manufacturers who choose to list products in such a manner as to appear far more desirable. And at times, when a manufacturer is being honest, their ingredients may appear less desirable though they are of higher quality.

Here is another example of an ingredient list:

Food A:

Lamb, brewer's rice, brown rice, poultry fat, beet pulp, rice bran...

Food B:

Brown rice, chicken meal, chicken fat, fish meal...

Remember that the weight of the ingredients are before being processed, so even though Food A has lamb listed as the first item it is still pretty much all water. After processing and all the moisture is removed, the lamb will be about $\frac{1}{4}$ the original amount. The rice ingredients will remain, pretty much the same. Whereas Food B, with the already processed chicken meal listed second will end up with more protein than Food A and will be the most desirable food choice.

Now, the first few ingredients will be the common names that most of us will at least recognize. However, as you read down the list, you will run into some

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pretty unusual names and terms that may sound undesirable even though they have many benefits and of course, may sound undesirable and actually be undesirable.

An unusual ingredient name that you are sure to run across is hydrolyzed protein. This means that the protein has been broken down into its component amino acids, or hydrolyzed. There are two methods of breaking proteins into amino acids; prolonged boiling in a strong acid or base such as potassium hydroxide or using an enzyme like pancreatic protease.

The thing is that hydrolyzed protein, while being used to enhance the flavor of the dog food, contains MSG (monosodium glutamate). Most of us are familiar with MSG because of all those Chinese take-out meals that vouch that there is no MSG added. MSG is a harmful food additive for both humans and dogs.

Another ingredient listing that causes pause is byproducts that are listed, such as poultry byproducts containing feathers, non-rendered parts of the carcass, beaks, fecal matter, and other foreign matter.

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS

The guaranteed analysis provides another way for consumers to compare pet foods. The analysis must guarantee the minimum percentages of crude protein and crude fat. It must also list the maximum of crude fiber and moisture percentages present in the food. Do not let the term 'crude' confuse you as this has nothing to do with the quality of the items, but the process of testing it instead.

Some manufacturers do provide other nutrients on the Guaranteed Analysis such as calcium, phosphorus, and sodium.

Here is an example of what a Guaranteed Analysis will look like on a pet food label:

Guaranteed Analysis

Crude Protein -	26.0%
Crude Fat -	16.0%
Crude Fiber -	4.0%
Moisture -	1.0.0%

This guaranteed analysis is given on the label based on AS IS or "call it as fed" basis. Nothing wrong with that. However, if you want to compare products with different moisture contents, you have to calculate percentages for both products at equal moisture content or it doesn't give you the information you need to make an informed decision.

Example

Let us say you have three dog foods you want to compare. Goodie's Bites, Harrees Dinner and Isstrick's Beef and Rice.

Goodies has 22 percent protein, 12 percent fat and 4 percent fiber AND 10 percent moisture AS FED. This would contain 90 percent dry matter.

Harree's has the same percentages except 12 percent moisture. This would contain 88 percent dry matter. (14.4 ounces a pound (0.5 kg))

Isstrick's also has the same percentages except 14 percent moisture. This would contain 86 percent dry matter. (14.1 ounces per pound (0.5 kg))

The more moisture your dog food contains, the less nutritious dry matter there is. That means you pay for extra water and get fewer nutrients. (13.8 ounces a pound (0.5 kg))

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY STATEMENT

This was mentioned earlier. However, it is worth going over again as it is a pretty important statement. When a pet food boasts the claim of a "complete and balanced" brand, it must be substantiated for nutritional adequacy by one of two means.

The first is that the pet food must contain ingredients formulated to provide levels of nutrients that meet an established profile. Right now, the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles are used. If the food met those standards, you will find these words on the bag of dog food:

"(Name of Product) is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles"

For those foods of the first method, they were found to contain the proper amount of protein, calcium, and other such essential nutrients needed for a healthy animal.

The second means of testing is following the AAFCO Feeding Trial Protocols. This means the dog food (or actually the whole FAMILY of dog foods in the same line) has been fed to dogs under certain guidelines and has been found to provide proper nutrition.

The statement to look for: *"Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that (name of product) provides complete and balanced nutrition..."*

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Keep in mind that premium dog foods are often the ones that sport such statements. However, in-home testing is the preferred method and these statements should be used as guidelines to lead you to the best dog food.

FEEDING DIRECTIONS

These directions are mostly used to guide anyone who is changing foods. As you will know how much your dog needs, you should use your best judgment when feeding your pet.

Really, the recommendations on the bag are only very basic guidelines. You must take into account your dog's age, breed, metabolism, level of activity, and their environment. Unfortunately, manufacturers have been known to over or understate amounts depending on whether their goal is to sell more food or to make their product look more economical than a competitor's.

CALORIE STATEMENT

Until recently, calories were not listed on dog food, but the AAFCO developed new regulations that placed this information there for consumers. When a calorie statement is made, it must be stated on a "kilocalories per kilogram" basis. A "kilogram" equals 2.2 pounds and a "kilocalorie" is the same as the "calories" that consumers are used to seeing on other food labels.

Calories provide a good idea of how well the product will be digested. The Guaranteed analysis should be taken into account along with the calories statement when comparisons are being made.

You can find the calories in a bag stated three different ways.

Gross Energy

The amount of energy in a food product on an "as fed" basis.

Digestible Energy

The amount of energy available to the dog after the amount lost in feces has been subtracted. Now, who do you suppose runs around and figures that kind of thing out?

Metabolizable Energy

The amount of energy available to the dog after the amount lost in feces, urine and gaseous products of digestion has been subtracted. This is the most common value used, and it is usually seen abbreviated as ME.

You can use the calorie content to your advantage by simply knowing how to read the information and convert it to useable knowledge. Comparing dog foods and deciding which ones are the best for your dog is an important reason to read the calorie content.

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Such as:

Big dog food company number ONE says this about their product
Gross energy 1,950 Kcal/lb,
Digestible energy 1,700 Kcal/lb
Metabolizable energy 1,550 Kcal/lb.

Big dog food company TWO says this about their product
Metabolizable energy content of 1900 Kcal/lb.

What you need to know here is that big dog Food Company TWO actually offers the more nutritious food, but big dog Food Company ONE succeeded in clouding the issue of nutrition by listing all three and trying to distract attention away from the actually relevant value which would be the metabolizable energy.

Dog food labels actually tell us a lot about the product including many items that would make us think twice about feeding the product to our dogs. Being prudent and taking time to actual read the label will not only save you money in the long run, but help your dog maintain a healthy diet.



3

THE BEST COMMERCIAL FOODS

Dog health and diet is important for the longevity of your canine pal. Understanding the nutritional and dietary needs of your pet, along with reading the label on the pet food and knowing what to look for, will be of great benefit.

As mentioned before in passing, lower quality foods will, more likely than not, lack many of the higher quality ingredients that provide the more digestible and usable items for the dog. It is the premium dog foods that will be the ones that cater to the nutritional needs of the dogs through better ingredients, and greater care with processing.

There have been problems with many of the lower quality dog foods and the ingredients that are used that have been brought to light in the early part of 2007. Speaking of problems with dog food will of course trigger the memory of the most recent devastating loss of canine and feline lives due to contaminated food. This was horrifying and widespread and opened the eyes of consumers about what was really in the food they were feeding their dogs.

Various reports indicated the numbers of affected cats and dogs hit the 39,000 mark across the country. Animals became extremely sick or died due to the contamination of commercial pet foods with an industrial chemical – melamine, used to make plastics and fertilizers. This chemical was found in more than 100 brands of pet food that were recalled in Canada and the USA starting in mid-March.

The major culprit was identified as rice protein concentrate (otherwise called rice gluten), NOT brown rice. Then in June, concerns were raised about reports of acetaminophen (Tylenol) being found in dog and cat food, followed by salmonella poisoning in others. If you want to cruise through the FDA site for information (some of which is dated by now due to the passage of time), here is their url:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html>

The second chemical also found with the melamine was cyanuric acid - deadly when combined. Both were found in the cat and dog food recall in March 2007. Cyanuric acid is commonly used to slow the breakdown of chlorine in swimming pools and hot tubs. It has NO place in pet food!

It was speculated then (and some still hold the same opinion now) that those two chemicals were in dog food because it was a sneaky and unethical way to increase the reported nitrogen content.

This staggering pet food recall was just the tip of the iceberg when it came to discovering what was actually in the pet food people were feeding their pets. Other things came to light – for instance, many of the cheaper commercial brands of pet foods were nothing more than inferior meat meals, cheap grains like corn and soy, fillers, by-products, pesticides, preservatives and toxins.

By the way, soy is one of the top cited allergens by Vets, which causes severe allergic reactions. Reactions can include coughing, sneezing, runny nose, hives, diarrhea, facial swelling, shortness of breath, swollen tongue, difficulty swallowing, fainting, and anaphylactic shock.

CHOOSING THE TOP TWELVE FOODS

In this section, a selection of twelve dog food brands will be discussed. Their ingredients will be listed along with other facts and information that will be of benefit for the owner and the dog. These twelve brands are considered some of the best on the market today.

Despite the 2007 disaster, commercial dog foods are often the ones to provide the best nutrients and balance that your dog requires and are still widely trusted when it comes to maintaining your dog's health. Commercial dog foods are formulated with your pet in mind and the manufacturers must follow the AAFCO standards as well as other government standards placed upon them.

However, for the sake of variety, there are other brands aside from those you might be familiar with that are listed. This is to display the many varieties and kinds of dog food available and to give owners an insight into what else is available if they choose to go with something other than the leading brands.

It is important to note that commercial dog food brands, especially those of high quality, much like the commercial brands listed below, meet the dietary requirements of dogs and often times exceed them. High quality commercial brands use the best ingredients available and take pride in providing their customers and customer's pets with the best options in dog food.

It is important to remember that dogs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and that this affects their dietary needs. While the brands listed here are among the best, owners must be cautious about feeding their dogs new food

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and must always take all the variables into consideration. Compare these foods to one another and then to what your dog's needs are.

A veterinarian will be able to assist you when it comes to changing foods as they can tell you what your dog needs in the way of nutrients. There is no "average dog" to compare all other dogs to, and only you and your veterinarian can know for sure if a diet is working.

Choosing the right high quality food along with proper exercise, portions, and meeting all the dog's medical needs, will increase your dog's lifespan and improve their mood and attitude. But the responsibility falls onto the dog's owners, so being diligent about reading labels and choosing the right dog food seems to be only wise course of action.

In an effort to help you, the pet owner, and your dog, who would probably really like some better food, here are the top 12 brands of dog food that you should look into purchasing.

How can you, as a loving dog owner, decide if a new dog food is worth your attention? By knowing not only what nutrients (protein, fats, and carbohydrates) your dog needs, but knowing what their sources should be.

You should also keep in mind that the main ingredients of your dog's food will be listed before the first source of fat. Knowing that will give you a better idea of where most of the nutrition in the food is coming from.

So we chose our top twelve dog foods by taking a look at their ingredients, and seeing how closely they matched the following standards:

PROTEIN

The protein in any dog food should come from high quality meat sources, because protein is the single most important nutrient in the canine diet. Your dog is primarily a carnivore, with a digestive tract which has evolved to break down and metabolize proteins and fats. But high quality meat-based proteins are also the single costliest ingredients in dog foods, and one of the ways in which pet food manufacturers preserve their profits is by skimping on the amount, or quality, or both, of the protein they use.

You should pass on any dog food which does not list either a named meat meal, or a named meat type followed by a named meat meal, as the first ingredient on its label. Walk away from any food which identifies its protein as animal meal, meat meal, fish meal, or poultry meal. You should look for the words beef, lamb, chicken, duck, turkey, venison, any other specific meat or fish, or eggs.

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You can bet that any dog food which does not mention where its protein came from does not have much of it, and what it does have did not come from the most desirable parts of the animal or bird.

BYE-BYE TO BY-PRODUCTS?

You will not have to make that decision if you are feeding a premium dog food, but if mid-priced foods are the best you can afford, the look for those which do not list by-products as their main ingredient, and make sure that the by-products they do list are specifically identified as beef, chicken, lamb, or some other barnyard animal.

CAN MEAL MAKE A MEAL?

Don't be afraid to go with a dog food which lists a specific kind of meat meal as its primary ingredient, because these meals are in no way the nutritional inferiors of fresh whole meat. They include both meat and skin, and sometimes ground bone (all of which your dog would consume in the wild) but are free of the hooves, feathers, and fur which make their way into by-products. Meat meal is simply quality meat from which much about 80%) of the water has been removed. It's also formulated to have the correct calcium/phosphorus ratio.

CARBOHYDRATES

Almost all dog foods, regardless of how much they cost, contain some kind of carbohydrates. We mentioned earlier that carbohydrates come in both digestible and indigestible forms, and each is necessary for your dog's health. Dry dog foods usually contain between thirty and seventy percent carbohydrate content, which is far more than a dog would consume in the wild.

Dogs can convert the protein they eat in to energy when necessary, but they can also convert carbohydrates, especially those which the dog food manufactures have processed for higher digestibility. Because of this, pet food makers can get away with putting just enough protein in their foods to meet your pet's need for amino acids and enzymatic function, and can supply their energy needs with much cheaper carbohydrates.

The best dog foods will, therefore, be those which have protein as their main source of energy, with their carbohydrate content coming from vitamin and mineral-rich vegetables and fruits.

WHOLE GRAINS, FRUITS, AND VEGGIES

If your budget requires that you feed a dog food which uses grains as a source of energy, try to keep its grain content as low as you can and make

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sure that they are whole grains, like brown rice, whole wheat, oats, or barley, because they are loaded with fiber but also those B vitamins we mentioned earlier.

Try to find a food which contains not only whole grains, but fruits and veggies, because they will keep your dog supplied with more vitamins, especially antioxidant vitamins which can prevent a host of health problems, and those essential minerals. Vegetables and fruits will maintain your pet's immune system function, while promoting healthy cell production.

Just like people, dogs can gain weight from consuming too many carbohydrates unless they are active enough to burn off the calories in the carbs. Your dog's system will convert carbs into energy more quickly than it does protein, raising his or her blood sugar levels and creating glucose which, if not burned off, will be stored as fat.

Another precaution you should take concerning the carbohydrates in your dog's food is to watch for any signs of an allergic reaction. Different breeds of dogs are allergic to different grains, with corn, wheat, and soy being the most likely to cause problems. A food allergy will probably surface with symptoms which you will mistake for a flea allergy, and if you suspect the carbs in the food are the cause, switch to a food with a different carbohydrate base and watch for improvement.

FATS

Look for a dog food which has both Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids to maintain your dog's skin and coat; sunflower oil, cold water fish oils; and ground flax seed are all excellent sources for these fatty acids.

But the best dog foods will also contain natural animal fat (chicken fat is often used) both because it makes them much more palatable and because it is a ready source of energy.

Finally, what's not in your dog food is just as important as what is in it. Stay away, if at all possible, from any foods which use artificial preservatives, colors or other ingredients (and those by-products!). Those colors are there strictly to please you, and your dog could not care less. There are vitamins and herbs which can function as preservatives, so try to find foods which use them.

Now it's time for our own recommendations. In the next chapter, in no particular order, are our choices for the Top Twelve Dog Foods, which all got high scores for their high-quality protein, low grain content, and wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and nutritional supplements.

THE TOP TWELVE COMMERCIAL DOG FOODS

CHAMPION PET FOODS ORIJEN ADULT



WHY IS IT ON OUR TOP TWELVE LIST?

Orijen claims that this food has a naturally correct balance of 70% meat to 30% fruits and vegetables, with no grains, and four of its first five ingredients are de-boned chicken, chicken meal, turkey meal, and lake whitefish. It also contains whole eggs, turkey salmon, and salmon meal.

Orijen adult has plenty of high quality fat sources, to provide those essential fatty acids. Its main source of fat is chicken fat (for palatability) but it also contains flax, salmon and anchovy oils, and sunflower oil.

Its main sources of carbohydrates are russet and sweet potatoes, and its fruits and vegetables include carrots, spinach, tomatoes, peas, apples, black currants and cranberries. This food is supplemented with Psyllium fiber, dried alfalfa, and dried kelp. Its broad range of fruits and vegetables meal it has plenty of the minerals and antioxidant vitamins your dog needs. It's also supplemented with glucosamine HCl, chondroitin sulfate and probiotics.

Orijen adult is a high protein, low carbohydrate food which comes very close to the natural diet of dogs in the wild.

WHAT'S IN IT?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>42.0% MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>162.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>3.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.7% MINIMUM</u>

OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID 2.0% MINIMUM

What Are Its Benefits?

The glucosamine and chondroitin in Orijen Adult food are effective in preventing or relieving osteoarthritis and chondroitin is also used to maintain eye health. Its probiotics make it highly digestible, and its russet potatoes are loaded with B-vitamins and minerals. Orijen adult also contains a broad selection of herbs like marshmallow root, chicory, burdock, and milk thistle, which improve digestive function, regulate blood sugar levels, and protect the liver.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Orijen Adult is sold through pet shops and veterinary clinics and online in the US, and Canada, and is available online in the UK. It is not available in Australia or New Zealand. You can locate an Orijen Adult distributor on the Champion Pet Foods website at:

<http://www.championpetfoods.com/orijen/storeLocator>

Orijen Adult is sold in a trial size for \$1.99, and in 5.5-pound, 15.4-pound, and 29.7 pound sizes for \$13.99, \$32.99, and \$58.99 respectively.

ARTEMIS COMPANY ARTEMIS MAXIMAL DOG



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

Artemis Maximal Dog has chicken meal as its first ingredient, followed by potatoes, and then fat. This means that the bulk of its ingredients by weight are chicken meal and potatoes, with the chicken meal being the more concentrated of the two. Artemis Maximal Dog will have a large amount of high quality protein.

This food is entirely without grains, getting its carbohydrate content from potatoes, which are also a good source of vegetable based protein, and it also contains whole eggs and skim milk powder, other proteins. Carrots, spinach, peas, blueberries, apples, tomatoes, and kelp are just some of its other ingredients which provide plenty of vitamins and minerals as well as carbohydrate content. It also has plenty of probiotics, organisms which will help your dog digest it.

The chicken fat in this food accounts for about 20% of its weight, making it extremely palatable.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>42.0% MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>22.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>3.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.6% MINIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>3.4% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

If your dog is a high energy working dog, or you are looking for a grain-free food to help you keep your dog at a healthy weight, this is the dog food for you. It contains no corn, wheat, or soy which can cause allergies, so you won't have to worry about your dog developing itchy skin, paws, or ears while eating this food. It's a completely natural food!

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

The high percentage of fat in this food may cause bloating in large breed dogs.

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

You can find retailers of Artemis products in your area of the US by visiting the interactive map on their website at:

<http://www.artemiscompany.com/retailer.asp>.

You can also purchase the food online at Amazon.com, and at:

<http://animalshelterstore.com>

You can normally expect to pay around \$14.00 for a 4-pound bag, \$35.00 for a 15-pound bag, and \$63.00 for a 30-pound bag.

Artemis Maximal Dog is sold only in pet stores and veterinary clinics in the US, or online. The company has no distributors in the UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand.



PETCUREAN GO NATURAL GRAIN FREE CANINE

Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

Like Artemis Maximal Dog, Petcurean Go contains no grains. Its first four listed ingredients, in fact, are identified meats: Chicken meal, Chicken, Turkey, and Turkey meal. Those are followed by potatoes and chicken fat, but Petcurean Go nearly matches Artemis maximal Dog with a fat content of 20%, because it also contains salmon oil and flax seed oil, which we have mentioned as excellent sources of those Omega fatty acids.

It also contains several other proteins, including herring meal, salmon, salmon meal, duck, and dried whole eggs. It has a greengrocer's supply of fruits and veggies, including pumpkin (terrific source of Vitamin A), apples, carrots, blueberries, cranberries, bananas, and lentils, and both digestive enzymes and probiotics to help your dog get the most nutrition from each meal.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>42.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>20.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>2.5% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.5% MINIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>3.0% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

You can feed you dog Petcurean Go Natural Grain Free canine for his or her entire life, because it will provide all the protein and amino acids he or she needs, along with those all important vitamins, minerals, and fatty acids. You can ensure that your dog remains at an ideal weight simply by increasing or decreasing the amount you feed to match your pet's activity and metabolic rate.

As a grain free dog food, it will not cause to the allergic reactions which some doge experience when eating foods with corn, soy, or wheat.

Because this food is so loaded with nutrients, you can actually feed up to 40% less of it than you would of cheaper foods, so your feeding costs will drop accordingly.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver of kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

You can find a list of US vendors for Petcurean Go Natural Grain Free Canine by visiting their website at:

http://www.petcurean.com/dealer_location.php

It is sold at both pet stores and veterinary clinics, and can also be purchased online at:

<http://www.k9cuisine.com>,

where it is priced at \$6.99 for a 1-pound bag and \$63.32 for a 25-pound bag.

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Petcurean GO Natural Grain Free Canine is available in Canada from pet food stores and veterinary clinics. There are no distributors in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.



NATURE'S VARIETY INSTINCT CHICKEN MEAL FORMULA

Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

The first five ingredients of this food are chicken meal, tapioca, chicken fat, pumpkinseeds, and menhaden fish meal. That's two good sources of protein, and two good sources of fat (including one rich in Omega fatty acids).

It has several other proteins and fats in smaller amounts, including salmon, duck, flaxseed oil, and olive oil. This food has a coating of high quality oils mixed with freeze-dried raw foods, including freeze dried meats, vegetables, and fruits which both make it more palatable and extend its shelf life.

And the tapioca is a great non-grain source of carbohydrates, making this food a nice alternative to our previous two choices if you dog dislikes potatoes.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>42.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>22.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>3.2% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS</u>	<u>0.69% MINIMUM</u>

OMEGA 6 FATTY ACIDS 3.61% MINIMUM

What Are Its Benefits?

It will supply your dog with all the amino acids, vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, and enzymes he or she needs to live a healthy, energetic life, while its lack of grains will keep your dog's weight under control.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

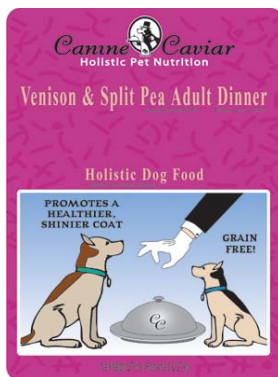
Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

You can find both US, Canadian, and online distributors of Nature's Variety Instinct Chicken Meal Formula at the company's website:

<http://www.naturesvariety.com/locator>

A 4-pound bag will cost around \$10.99; a 13.2-pound bag, \$23.99; and a 25.3-pound bag, \$42.99. The food is sold both in pet stores and veterinary clinics, and as of this writing the company had no distributors in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.

CANINE CAVIAR VENISON AND SPLIT PEA ADULT DINNER



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

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Canine Caviar takes a somewhat different approach with this dry dog food. While it's a high-protein, high-fat, no-grain diet, it has none of the fruits and vegetables found in our previous choices. Canine Caviar believes that fruits and vegetables should be fed fresh if they are to have the most impact on your dog's health.

They also claim that the ingredients in this food are cooked for only six seconds, to keep them in as natural a state as possible. Because of this, there are no additional probiotics added to improve the food's digestibility.

The food's main ingredients are Venison Meal, Split Pea, Canola Oil, Dried Pumpkin, Whole Ground Flaxseed, Sun-Cured Alfalfa, Venison Tripe, Dried Beet Pulp, Coconut Oil, Borage Oil, and Primrose Oil.

Unlike most dry foods, it contains not chicken fat, and the fats it does have are all excellent sources of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids. Its Omega 6 fatty acid content is the highest among the foods we have chosen.

The food's vitamin and mineral content doesn't suffer from its lack of fruits and vegetables, because it has them supplemented. It is also rich in herbal compounds to support your dog's different digestive and metabolic functions.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>38.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>20.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>4.4% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>8% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>2.7% MINIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>4.2% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

Canine Caviar Venison and Split Pea Adult Dinner contains yucca to promote joint health, garlic to enhance immune system function, lecithin to increase fat and protein absorption, and alfalfa to soothe the stomach.

Its lack of grains makes this food an excellent choice for dogs which are allergic to wheat, corn, or soy, and for dogs with diabetes.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

This food is distributed in the US through pet food stores. You can find the store locator at:

<http://caninecaviar.com/index.html>

It is also available online at <http://www.waggintails.com>. A 9-pound bag costs \$21.99.

Canine Caviar has no UK, New Zealand, or Australian distributors.

THE BLUE BUFFALO CO BLUE WILDERNESS



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

This food makes it into our list of recommendations both because it contains only a tiny amount of grain in the form of oatmeal, and because four of its first five ingredients are named sources of high-quality protein. It contains de-boned chicken, chicken meal, turkey meal, and fish meal (we'd like the fish to be identified).

Chicken fat is its primary source of fat, with flaxseeds added for their Omega 6 fatty acids. But it has considerably less of the Omega 3 fatty acid than our previous three choices.

It also contains a good variety of fruits and vegetables, including antioxidant-rich carrots, sweet potatoes, blueberries, cranberries, kelp, and alfalfa meal. Potato starch is its main carbohydrate. It is enriched with vitamins, minerals, and probiotics to make it more digestible.

Blue Wilderness has no artificial ingredients.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>42.3 0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>16.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>4.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.25% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>3.5% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

Because it is free of corn, soy, and wheat, Blue Wilderness is suitable for dogs which are prone to grain-based allergies. It does contain some oatmeal, but oatmeal is not considered a high-risk allergen.

The vitamins added to Blue Wilderness will strengthen your dog's immune system in any life stage. It has considerably less fat than our previous three choices, and combined with its lack of grains, it may be a good food for weight control.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Some dogs may develop gas and loose stool when first switching to Blue Buffalo Blue Wilderness food, and its sweet potato and oatmeal fiber may keep their stool softer. But adding a tablespoon of unsweetened canned pumpkin to the food will often be enough to prevent this problem.

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

You can find a list of US and Canadian distributors at the BLUE Buffalo website at:

<http://www.bluebuff.com/products/dogs/wilderness.shtml>.

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The food is sold in both pet food stores and veterinary clinics, and is available online at <http://www.waggintails.com>.

It comes in 5-pound, 12-pound, and 26-pound bags, priced online at \$10.39, 419.19, and \$35.99 respectively. There are no distributors in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.

NOW! GRAIN FREE ADULT FOOD FORMULA



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

This is the first grain free food on our list which contains no meat meals. While its protein content, at 26% minimum, is not as high as some of the previous foods, the sources of that protein are de-boned turkey, de-boned salmon, de-boned duck, and cottage cheese.

Its fat comes from canola oil and flaxseed, for good Omega fatty acid content, and it has plenty of vitamin and mineral-rich carbohydrates in potato flour and potatoes, vegetables (carrots, lentil beans, broccoli, spinach, alfalfa sprouts, and garlic) and fruits (pumpkin, bananas, blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, papaya, pineapple). It's also supplemented with probiotics and enzymes to enhance its digestibility.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>26.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>16.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>4.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.5% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>2.5% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

Its higher carbohydrate content will provide your dog with plenty of quick energy, without exposing him or her to the risk of allergic reactions which can come from eating grain-based foods. Its protein is of the highest quality, and will meet all your dog's needs for essential amino acids, while its garlic will improve immune system function.

The fatty acids from the flaxseed, salmon, and canola oil will maintain your dogs' skin and coat.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Dogs which have trouble digesting potatoes should avoid this food.

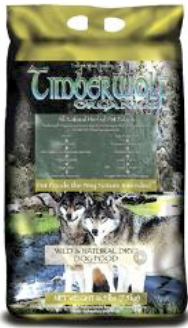
Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Now! Grain Free Adult Food Formula is available through a network of pet stores in the US and Canada, and online at several different sites including: www.k9cuisine.com/

You can find a distributor near you at:

http://www.petcurean.com/dealer_location.php

A 1-pound bag retails online for \$6.99, and a 25-pound bag for \$63.32. There are no distributors for this food in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.



WILD & NATURAL DRY™ CANID FORMULA

Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

This grain free food has been formulated to mimic the diet of a wolf in the wild, with chicken and chicken meal constituting its first two ingredients, and chicken fat and salmon oil its sources of fat. Its chief carbohydrate is dried potato product, (we'd feel better if the product were defined more clearly)

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and it also contains a wide variety of dried vegetables (dried carrots, dried celery, dried beets, dried parsley, dried lettuce, dried watercress, dried spinach) along with dehydrated alfalfa meal and dried kelp.

Dried plant products contain higher concentrations of vitamins and minerals than fresh ones. This food also has plenty of probiotics and mineral/ amino acid complexes, B-vitamins, and Yucca for joint support.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>36.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>18.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>3.5% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>9% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>1.2% MINIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>3.4% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

Its concentrated ingredients mean that you dog will have to eat much less of this food to satisfy all his or her nutritional needs, and lack of grains means that you won't have to worry about corn, wheat, or soy-based allergic reactions.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

You can find a list of pet store distributors of this food by visiting the Timberwolf Organics website at:

<http://timberwolforganics.com/where-to-buy>

You can also purchase the food on the company website. A 4-pound bag sells for \$11, 99; a 16.5-pound bag for \$36.99; and a 33-pound bag for \$62.99.

There are no distributors of this food in the UK, Australia or New Zealand.

WELLNESS CORE™ ORIGINAL FORMULA



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

Wellness Core™ Original Formula is not only grain-free; it also has 35% fewer total carbohydrates than traditional dog food, making it a great choice for less active animals. Its protein comes from five high quality sources: deboned turkey, chicken, turkey meal, chicken meal, and chicken liver.

The carbohydrates in this food come from easily digestible sweet potatoes and potatoes, and its fat comes from salmon, flax, and canola oils to provide plenty of Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids. It has fruits, vegetables, and herbs (carrots, sweet potatoes, kale, broccoli, spinach, parsley, apples, blueberries, chicory root extract, yucca schidigera extract, and rosemary extract) to provide antioxidant protection and minerals. It also contains Glucosamine HCl and Chondroitin sulfate to protect against joint damage.

What's in It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>34.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>14.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>4.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>10% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.7% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>3.25% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

This food provides plenty of protein to supply your dog with essential amino acid and energy, and its low fat and carbohydrate content will help your dog stay fit and trim. Its Yucca, glucosamine, and chondroitin all help maintain

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joint health, and its fruits and vegetables supply antioxidant vitamins to protect against free radical damage.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

The manufacturer has formulated this food for dogs one year of age and older, so it is not appropriate for puppies.

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Wellness CORE™ Original Formula is sold in pet stores in the US and Canada. You can find a distributor near you at:

<http://www.geoserve.com/forms/omhwell.htm>

It is also available online at:

<http://www.petfooddirect.com>

It retails online at \$9.49 for a 4-pound bag; \$25.49 for a 12-pound bag; and \$46.99 for a 26-pound bag.

There are no distributors for this food in the UK, New Zealand or Australia.

DOGSWELL VITALITY CHICKEN SWEET POTATO



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

We've presented what we think are twelve great choices for grain free, high protein, well balanced dry foods. But we thought that every dog deserves a bit of variety from time to time, and if you're looking for an equally healthy

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and balanced wet food, Dogswell Vitality Chicken Sweet Potato (and their other grain free formulas) may fill the bill.

This food has no rendered meats, no hormones, and none of the grains like corn, wheat, or soy which cause allergies in so many pets. Its first six ingredients by weight are chicken, chicken broth, water sufficient for processing, chicken liver, dried egg product (we'd prefer whole eggs), and salmon, so it has plenty of protein.

Its carbohydrates come from peas, potato starch, sweet potatoes, and a variety of antioxidant packed fruits and veggies including cranberries, blueberries, carrots, spinach, and zucchini. It contains both canola and flax seed oil for Omega fatty acids, and is supplemented with both minerals and B vitamins.

What's in It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CRUDE PROTEIN</u>	<u>8 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FAT</u>	<u>4.0 % MINIMUM</u>
<u>CRUDE FIBER</u>	<u>1.0% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>MOISTURE</u>	<u>82% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 3 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.1% MAXIMUM</u>
<u>OMEGA 6 FATTY ACID</u>	<u>0.7% MINIMUM</u>

What Are Its Benefits?

Dogswell's Vitality Chicken Sweet Potato is an easily digestible food rich in antioxidant Vitamins A and E and the healthy fats needed to maintain your pet's skin and coat.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Dogs with an intolerance for sweet potatoes should not be given this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Dogswell Vitality Chicken Sweet Potato is available through a network of pet stores and natural food stores throughout the US, and you can find a store in your area by visiting the company's website at: <http://www.dogswell.com>.

You can also order your food directly from several online vendors. The company has no distributors in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.

The food is sold in 12.5 ounce cans, with online prices running around \$1.99 for a single can; \$22.68 for a 12-can case; and \$41.99 for a 24-can double case.

SOJO'S EUROPA GRAIN-FREE DOG FOOD MIX

Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

We decided to add this food because so many pet owners are now turning to raw meat as the main source of their dog's protein. With Europa Grain Free Dog Mix, you can easily prepare a balanced meal for your pet by adding the raw meat and water to the mix in the proportions suggested by the manufacturer, and your dog will get the benefit of its sweet potatoes, fruits, and vegetables. It also contains flax for Omega fatty acids.

This mix is a great idea for anyone who doesn't have time to prepare a raw diet from scratch, and can be made up in amounts to cover three or four day's worth of meals as long as it is tightly sealed and refrigerated. You can also add your own fresh fruits, herbs, and vegetables to it if you want, to customize your dog's meals even further.

What's In It?

INGREDIENT	AMOUNT
CRUDE PROTEIN	14.7 % MINIMUM
CRUDE FAT	6.5 % MINIMUM
CRUDE FIBER	15.4% MAXIMUM
MOISTURE	7% MAXIMUM

What Are Its Benefits?

The sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, celery, and apple in this food will provide your dog with highly digestible, antioxidant rich carbohydrates, while its whole egg is a great source of protein with all the essential amino acids. It also contains garlic to support the immune system, kelp and alfalfa for digestion, and ginger root as a blood purifier.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Dogs who have an intolerance for sweet potatoes should avoid this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Sojo's Europa is available at pet stores and veterinary clinics in the US. You can locate one near you at:

<http://www.sojos.com/retailers/directory.aspx>,

where you will also find the address of their Canadian distributor.

You can also order this food from the Sojourner farms website at:

<http://www.sojos.com/europa.html>

and at several other online sites, which you can find here:

<http://www.sojos.com/online.html>

The company has no distributors in the UK, New Zealand or Australia.

WELLNESS 95% CHICKEN



Why Is It on Our Top Twelve List?

Wellness has introduced a variety of high protein food toppers which contain 95% meat (beef, turkey, venison, and salmon are also available) so that you can easily upgrade a less expensive dry food with additional high-quality protein. These foods contain 95% human grade USDA quality meats, with no grains.

What's In It?

<u>INGREDIENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
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CRUDE PROTEIN	9.0 % MINIMUM
CRUDE FAT	6.0 % MINIMUM
CRUDE FIBER	1.0% MAXIMUM
MOISTURE	78% MAXIMUM

This food, however, should be considered only a supplement or a treat, because it does not have enough fats, carbohydrates, or other nutrients to maintain your dog's health.

What Are Its Benefits?

Feeding this food with your dog's regular dry food, or using it to add to a product like Sojo's Europa Grain-Free mix, will ensure that your pet gets plenty of the finest quality protein, and a full complement of essential amino acids.

What Dogs Should Avoid It?

Because of its high protein content, this food may not be appropriate for dogs suffering from specific liver or kidney disorders. If your dog falls into this category, consult with your vet before starting your pet on this food.

Where Can You Buy It, and What Does It Cost?

Wellness 95% Chicken is sold in pet stores and health food stores in the US and Canada. You can find a distributor near you at: <http://www.geoserve.com/forms/omhwell.htm>

It is also available online at <http://www.petfooddirect.com>.

There are no distributors in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand.

4

THE BEST HOMEMADE FOODS

The other option aside from high quality commercially purchased dog food is making it right at home. This option has become more and more popular over the past few years as it allows owners to choose directly what is going into their dog's bowl. Another option, which is also very popular, is the BARF diet.

The BARF Diet is suitable for many dogs but it takes time and dedication on the owner's part. While there are noticeable differences between the BARF diet and a diet based on commercial dog foods, the purpose of both diets is to provide the dog with the best nutrients possible.

Commercial dog foods are scientifically formulated to meet the dietary needs of your dog without the fuss and muss needed for the BARF diet.

In this section, the BARF diet will be explored but readers should note that the BARF diet is not always the best method of feeding your dog and it takes a great amount of time to prepare and research the foods. Conversely, commercial brand dog foods have undergone several tests to insure that they are compatible with the dietary needs of the dog. Basically, a dog will receive just about the same benefits of the BARF diet if he remains on a commercial diet and may even receive more nutrients that way.

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what's right for your dog.

THE BARF DIET

One really important thing to know about BARF (besides what the letters stand for) is to know that if you do choose to feed this diet, **DO NOT FEED COOKED BONES**. They will splinter and can cause fatal internal damage to your dog.

And now – what does BARF stand for? Seems you can say it stands for a couple of things, but the most often cited explanation is **Bones And Raw Food**. The other one floating around on the Internet is **Biologically Appropriate Raw Food**, which is attributed to Dr. Ian Billinghurst, one of the original Barfers.

Whatever the case, the best way to understand the most popular BARF foods is to look at the ingredients themselves. For this we went to the original

BARF World (home of Dr. Ian Billinghurst) and looked at the ingredients of his fresh frozen patties. You'll find the ingredients quite interesting and note the ABSENCE of grains.

Chicken BARF patties ingredients

Chicken, Finely Ground Chicken Bones, Chicken Liver, Egg, Cultured Kefir, Broccoli, Celery, Spinach, Carrot, Ground Flax Seed, Bok Choy, Dried Alfalfa Meal, Apple, Pear, Grapefruit, Orange, Dried Kelp Powder, Cod Liver Oil, Garlic, Capsicum, Vitamin E Supplement, Zinc Oxide, Manganous Oxide.

Beef BARF patties ingredients

Beef, Finely Ground Beef Bones, Beef Liver, Egg, Cultured Kefir, Broccoli, Celery, Spinach, Carrot, Ground Flax Seed, Bok Choy, Dried Alfalfa Meal, Beef Kidney, Unbleached Beef Tripe, Apple, Pear, Grapefruit, Orange, Dried Kelp Powder, Cod Liver Oil, Garlic, Capsicum, Vitamin E Supplement, Zinc Oxide, Manganous Oxide

Lamb BARF patties ingredients

Lamb, Finely Ground Lamb Bones, Lamb Liver, Egg, Cultured Kefir, Broccoli, Celery, Spinach, Carrot, Ground Flax Seed, Bok Choy, Dried Alfalfa Meal, Lamb Kidney, Unbleached Lamb Tripe, Apple, Pear, Grapefruit, Orange, Dried Kelp Powder, Cod Liver Oil, Garlic, Capsicum, Vitamin E Supplement, Zinc Oxide, Manganous Oxide.

Combination BARF patties ingredients

Beef, Lamb, Chicken, Pork, Finely Ground Beef Bones, Beef Liver, Egg, Cultured Kefir, Broccoli, Celery, Spinach, Carrot, Ground Flax Seed, Bok Choy, Dried Alfalfa Meal, Beef Kidney, Unbleached Beef Tripe, Apple, Pear, Grapefruit, Orange, Dried Kelp Powder, Cod Liver Oil, Garlic Capsicum, Vitamin E Supplement, Zinc Oxide, Manganous Oxide.

Bottom line, BARF is about feeding dogs (and cats) properly. That would mean properly according to BARF proponents who say that you need to feed a dog the diet it was evolved to eat, bone and raw foods, NOT grains etc. You can add supplements, but other than that, Mother Nature's best is what supposedly works well for our canine companions – who evolved from WOLVES.

Wolves and their evolutionary descendents rely on bones as a major part of their diet for things like teeth cleaning, etc. Trouble is, over time we have taken our dogs away from their roots and started feeding them grains and other things they would not typically eat in the wild. You won't find zoo animals being fed an artificial grain-based diet. Pet food companies certainly don't hold with the BARF theory, and in fact, a good many Veterinarians do not either.

BARF is about feeding a biologically appropriate diet for a dog that is made up of raw whole foods like those eaten by their ancestors. This would include

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muscle meat, bone, fat, organ meat and vegetable materials and any other foods that mimic what the wild ancestors ate.

BARF isn't about duplicating what wolves ate in case you are wondering; it is about getting as close as possible to what they ate – in other words mimicking their diet. What BARF aims for is to provide our dogs with a diet combined with an environment that maximizes their best health. What that means to someone who feeds BARF is feeding a biologically appropriate diet rather than a natural diet.

It does seem a little complicated at first, as is anything when you first try something new. However, if you do your research properly and thoroughly, it isn't hard to do. It is tricky making sure you get the supplement ratios right, but this too passes as you get more familiar with the BARF diet. The whole philosophy behind BARF is to feed a balanced diet over time – not all right at once. This should take some of the pressure off you to "get it right" if you are going to try this diet.

Here is just ONE sample menu of BARF that you can feed your dog. Note: each dog is different in its needs and preferences, so if you are going to feed this diet, you will need to understand and know what YOUR dog will need.

SAMPLE DIET ONLY

Morning meal:

About 1 pound (0.5 kg) of raw meaty bones 4-6 raw chicken wings; or 2-3 chicken backs; or 1-2 turkey necks

Evening meal:

cup of veggie slop and about 1 pound (0.5 kg) of raw meaty bones and/or muscle meat (combined) same or similar raw meaty bones as fed in the morning; and/or ground meat (beef, ostrich, turkey, lamb, whatever) with egg shell powder or calcium supplement; and/or whatever other types of meats or meaty bones that are cheap - chicken feet, emu, fish, lamb, etc.; and/or offal (exclusive of liver) weekly; and/or whole egg with shell a couple times a week and essential fatty acids, avocado; or flax seed oil; or (sometimes) canned sardines or fish oil and supplements vitamin C; and probiotics; and trace minerals; and (every few days) vitamin E





Offal is animal organs such spleen, intestine, brain, lungs.

Veggie slop is pulped vegetables that typically consist of any combination of: various lettuces, celery, carrots, squash, cucumber, sprouts, kale, spinach, broccoli, etc. You can throw in apples and garlic in the summer. Each batch can be different, and you can make large quantities and freeze.

Snacks:

 Fruit

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-  marrow bones
-  freeze dried liver
-  freeze dried salmon
-  any commercial treat that is healthy

You'll note the word avocado is bolded in the above example sample BARF menu because the American Veterinary Medicine Association, and the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center advises that avocados (fruit, pit, and plant) are toxic to dogs and contain a compound called persin, which can damage heart, lung and other tissues.

They are high in fat and can trigger stomach upset, vomiting and even pancreatitis. Symptoms of toxicity include difficulty breathing, abdominal enlargement, and abnormal fluid accumulations in the chest, abdomen and sac around the heart. The amount that needs to be ingested to cause signs is not known.

Of course, not all BARF diet samples or actual diets fed will have avocados in them, nor does this mean they are fed on a daily basis. However, it does highlight the need to do your research very carefully before you try the BARF method.

CHANGING OVER TO BARF

If you do decide to go the BARF route, don't switch them over cold or they won't be able to handle the change from kibble to nibble. Take it slow and easy, much like switching from one commercial (premium) food to another. First, feed some lean chicken or turkey necks or backs only for the first couple of days.

Keep the meals small and do let your dog overdo it. They will just about knock you over to eat the "new" food. But if you let them gorge, they'll have stomach problems and LOTS of stool. Once your dog has settled into the lean chicken etc routine for a few days, then start adding bland veggies with a bit of lean ground meat of some sort.

By the way, your veggies need to be pulped in the blender, juicer or food processor. Why? It makes the "slop" easier to digest. That's because dogs cannot digest cellulose and plant cell walls are made of cellulose. If we want our dogs to get the nutrition out of the plants, you have to crush the cell walls. Chopping doesn't work as well as the small chunks inside can't be digested. Don't cook the veggies either, as that destroys a lot of the nutrients and enzymes, which is counter-productive to the purpose of barf in the first place.

Wait a week or two on the simple diet before you start adding in richer foods like eggs and liver and maybe a little extra fat on your meats. Continue on for a few more weeks, then you can think about adding supplements if you want to. Don't try to do it all at once. Not only would it be too overwhelming

for you, it would overload your dog's digestive system as well. Slow and easy is what you need to do.

If you have an older dog, take even more care in switching over to BARF and ensure you add digestive enzymes and probiotics daily, to help a smooth transition to the new food. Continue the probiotics even after transition, to keep a constant supply of beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract.

What if you want to feed a half and half diet; as in half kibble and half raw because you are not sure about feeding a total raw diet? You can do that, but it will cause a few problems. No, not major ones, but just be aware that kibble and raw are digested differently, so DO NOT FEED them together in the same bowl. Feed one in the morning and one at night.

But, how do you know how much to feed? Well, there is a general formula to this. It isn't really all guesswork. If you follow the general rule of thumb, you would feed approximately 60% raw meaty bones (RMBs) like chicken, turkey etc. and 40% veggies. That's a rough estimate to start with. Of course, your dog may have varying needs and that is what you have to figure out over time as you play with the diet.

What in heck are raw meaty bones? RMBs are soft enough for the dog to chew up like chicken carcasses/back/neck/wings, lamb necks, oxtails, turkey necks, etc. These are bones you would use as a MEAL. If you are concerned about the bones, you can soak them overnight in apple cider vinegar, which will soften them even further.

Bones to play with or clean their teeth with are called recreational bones. They're larger to chew on but your dog will not eat the whole bone - things like beef marrow bones, femurs, knuckle bones, etc.

So, to find out how much to be feeding your pet, it would go "roughly" like this. Multiply your dog's weight by 16 to get the number of ounces he weighs. Then, multiply that by .02, which gives you 2 % of his body weight.

Multiply that by .6 to give you the weight of raw meaty bones you should feed. And then go back to the 2% of his body weight and multiply that number by .4 to get the weight in ounces of vegetable mix you should feed.

Something you should be aware of is that dogs can (not all do) go through something very much like detox when coming off grains. When switching a dog over from commercial dog food to BARF, the dog's body may begin the process of ridding itself of toxins and impurities as it adjusts to the intake of proper nutrients. This process is called detox.

How long does detox last? It varies from dog to dog and in some dogs does not happen at all. On average, it may last one week, or a month or several weeks. Common symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, bad breath and itchy

skin. By the way, expect these symptoms to get worse before they get better. The usual advice from dedicated BARFers is to ride it out, as it DOES get better and to keep your dog as comfortable as possible during this process.

This is also one of the reasons why you want to introduce new foods very slowly, to allow his body time to catch up with the changes. You also want to make sure there are no allergic responses to anything you are giving. You can't find that out if you throw the kitchen sink into his bowl and let him go for it.

If you can get your dog to eat pure pumpkin, this will help with the runs. If not, slow down the food introduction process and head for the nearest bookstore and stock up on the bible of raw feeding for BARFers written by Dr. Ian Billinghurst, "Give Your Dog a Bone".

Still not sure how much to feed? It's honestly not a really exact science simply because each dog is different in its needs and requirements. But in general, you can start with about 2 to 3% of your dog's bodyweight (more for pups - up to about 10% for them) and adjust from there. Just make sure you keep a close eye on your dog for signs of weight gain or loss. The main thing is to make sure to feed healthy.

What about combining things to feed? Yes, you can combine SOME things to feed at the same time, but there are things that should not be fed together. This isn't as difficult to follow as you might think.

Here's why you don't combine certain foods together. For more information on this, you may want to check out the book *Keep Your Dog Healthy the Natural Way* by Pat Lazarus.

HOW TO FEED BARF

How you feed your dog BARF is important for their health. Why? It has to do with the digestive organs which secrete enzymes to break down food so that it's used properly by the body. For instance, when carbohydrates and proteins are eaten at the same time, the protein enzymes start working first. The carbs wait, and while they wait, they ferment and release toxins in the body.

Meats are only to be given at one meal, along with other heavy proteins like eggs or milk. Do not mix this with grains. At the other meal, give the carbs (the fruits and grains, if you choose to use them). Veggies can be given with either grains or proteins. Fruits, except apples, should be fed alone and at least twenty minutes before or after anything else.

Feeding grains at all in a BARF diet is still highly controversial for the same reasons you already read. Dogs are not cows and don't need grains to

survive and thrive. That's not to say you can't feed them, it's just to say it's not a good idea as it really does them no good.

SHOULD YOU SUPPLEMENT?

Yes and no! Don't you hate answers like that? No, if you are feeding them a varied highly bio-available diet with all the things they need. They would then derive all they need from the food. Yes, you can still supplement them occasionally. The biggest thing is to NOT over supplement.

Since BARFers don't feed the WHOLE animals including eyes, brains, stomach and intestines, adding essential fatty acids like fish oil or flaxseed oil is good. Yogurt also has good bacteria and can be fed as well. Consider kelp now and then for its trace elements and vitamins C and E for their antioxidant properties. We're not talking about adding these every day as a normal part of the diet, unless there is good and sufficient reason to do so, such as illness or chronic stress.

Many people who BARF wonder if they need to supplement their dog's diet. In part, we've covered that in the previous section. And the answer is yes you can, but don't over do it. The question then becomes what do you use and why or what is in it that makes it a good supplement for your dog.

In general, vitamins and minerals at the right levels promote the health of your dog. They help boost their stamina, help with fertility, increase their disease resistance, and promote a longer life. Not a bad list of recommendations, is it? This is pretty much in a nutshell what we would all like for our dogs.

A properly formulated BARF diet will contain a wealth of vitamins and minerals, delivered in the right form for your dog, and honestly, they shouldn't need a supplement.

However, having said that, there are many factors in the food chain that you can't really control – e.g. food grown on poor quality soils, harvested before ripening and transported long distances, food left on the shelf longer that it should be, etc. These factors may lower levels of vitamins and minerals in the food you are feeding.

Also, since BARF is so individual in nature, you may have a dog that is older or younger or has a special need for extra supplements in the form of vitamins or minerals. There are two vitamin and mineral supplements that may be used on a regular basis. The first one is kelp powder. Note: most BARFers recommend you use organic supplements whenever you can for optimal quality and nutrition.

Kelp is quite the marvel. It is a rich source of A, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-12, C, E, G, S, calcium, chlorine, copper, iodine, iron, lithium, magnesium,

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phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, sulfur, zinc, chromium, cobalt, manganese, niacin, riboflavin, sodium, thiamine.

It has high fiber content and helps promote the proper function of the thyroid gland. If you're familiar with its use in holistic medicine, you will recall it is known for its anti-tumor, anti-inflammatory, and anti-rheumatic properties and its ability to cleanse the digestive tract, and prevent the absorption of toxic metals.

The second recommended supplement is alfalfa powder, noted to contain all eight of the amino Acids, Beta Carotene, Biotin, Lysine, Tryptophan, A, B-2, B-3, B-5, B-6, B-9, B-12, B-complex, C, E, G, K, U, P, enzymes, aluminum, chlorophyll, calcium, chlorine, sodium, fluorine, iron, magnesium, potassium, silicone, sulfur, phosphorus, trace minerals. Besides providing fiber, alfalfa also has antibacterial, antioxidant and antifungal properties.

Again you will likely recognize this as also being used in holistic medicine. By the way, if you choose to use this with the barf diet, the rough dose is 100 pounds (45.36 kg) - 1 1/2 tbs; 50 lbs - 3 tsp; 25 lbs 1 1/2 tsp; 10 lbs 3/4 tsp.

5 MAKING THE CHANGE TO A NEW AND BETTER DIET






Now that you have some idea on what different and better foods are available on the market, you may be tempted to change your current food right away. There are risks with changing dog food and it needs to be done carefully depending on your dog and the new food you are going to.

SWITCHING FOODS

Although we see many dogs as hardy creatures and marvel at what they manage to eat, the fact is that a dog's digestive system is very sensitive. It is important to gradually change a dog's diet slowly and over time. Be on the look out for any adverse effects caused by the change, and consult a veterinarian if any symptoms persist for more than a few days.

By not changing a dog's diet slowly, you may subject your pet to:

- Stomach cramps
- Excess Gas
- Heartburn
- Indigestion

-  Diarrhea
-  Vomiting
-  Refusal to Eat

Even though you have found a healthier alternative to the current dog food, your dog may not know that and as a creature of habit, would prefer the old to the new. With this in mind, the first few tries may be difficult. However, with a few simple tricks and tips, the transition should be easy.

Gradual change is the key, so start by mixing the old and new food together in a 25% to 75% ratio of new to old. Over the next few days, slowly increase the ratio of new food while decreasing the old food. At the end of this process, the new food will make up 100% of the food bowl. It is possible that the dog will be stubborn and eat only the old food out of the mix, but no need to worry as a healthy dog can go for a day of missing meals. He will soon come to like the new food with time and patience.

The gradual introduction of food is important so that the dog does not stop eating all together. When introducing the new food, do not be demanding and overbearing. Instead, be encouraging and use a pleasant tone of voice as this will ease your dog into the new food.

SWITCHING TO THE BARF DIET

The switch from dry kibble to the BARF diet needs to be done with a few considerations in mind and a more watchful eye, as some dogs will have problems switching. There are two methods used when switching dogs over to the BARF diet.

THE RAPID SWITCH:

This is the popular choice as it is easy, fast, and hassle free. You simply make the switch with the next meal. Considerations to keep in mind when making the Rapid Switch whether or not you believe your dog can handle such a change. Usually, younger dogs and those dogs that have a healthy, normal gastrointestinal system are the ones able to handle such a switch.

Dogs that are older or that have problems with their digestive system may have issues, as they can not tolerate kibble and raw food in their digestive tract at the same time. This can result in vomiting and diarrhea. This also means that owners have no choice but to hold off the rapid switch and allow the dog's system to be flushed.

Another option is to have the dog fast for one or two days until the kibble is out of the system and then introduce the BARF diet. While this may seem cruel, a one or two day fast is allowed as long as the dog can handle it and has no special dietary needs that are met through food.

THE SLOW SWITCH:

This method takes time, sometimes a significant amount of time, to fully switch from kibble to the BARF diet. It is not recommended to continue feeding the dog both kibble and BARF as this will lead to digestion problems. It needs to be one or the other.

There are three ways to go about the Slow Switch.

The first is simple enough; you feed the dog a meal of the BARF diet and a meal of the old food. Each day decrease the amount of meals of the old food until your dog's meals are nothing but the BARF diet.

The second way is mixing the old food in with the BARF diet and gradually decrease the amount of old food until the dog is eating nothing but the BARF diet. A problem with this way comes in when the dog can not keep both kibble and BARF diet in its systems at the same time. If this is the case, you will have to follow the Rapid Switch method.

The last way is for owners who were already feeding their dog home cooked foods. Slowly introduce the dog to rawer states of those foods until he is eating nothing but the raw food. However, if the dog suffers from an immune deficiency and can not eat raw food, owners can cook the BARF diet, though this is not recommended for healthy dogs.

SWITCHING FROM CANNED TO DRY FOOD AND BACK AGAIN

It may become necessary to switch from canned dog food to dry dog food. Whether finances, medical conditions, or other factors are the reason, it is important to do the switch in a smart and responsible manner.

Canned food is drastically different from dry food in many ways aside from the texture. Often times, pets will resist the change and respond by acting out or just not eating the new food. This is why it is important to change their food in a manner that is not stressful.

Most owners will slowly add dry food to the bowl and bit by bit reduce the amount of wet food present until the dog is eating only the dry food. This is perhaps the best method as it slowly introduces the dog to the new food. The same can be done when switching from dry food to wet food.

If your dog is eating around the newly introduced food then you may need to switch brands. And if all else fails, a hungry dog will eat; just make sure that your dog is healthy enough for such a drastic measure. It is best to consult with your veterinarian before attempting to switch food.

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Keep a close eye on your dog during any transitions in foods. Improperly switching foods can lead to several side effects like the ones discussed above. A change in bowel movements and temperaments may also be a sign that the switch in foods is not agreeing with your dog. If this should happen, consult with your veterinarian.

SECTION 2 SPECIAL DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

6

SPECIAL FEEDING REQUIREMENTS

Certain dogs will need special feed requirements due to their nutritional profile. Puppies, adults, pregnant dogs, and seniors all require a different diet to meet their individualized needs.

Different dog foods will have different methods and amounts they suggest for dogs in differing life stages and some of the top twelve dog food brands will not have any recommendations listed, so it is really up to owner and their vet to decide how much of the food is appropriate.

PUPPIES

Much of the thought that must go into supplying a healthy diet for puppies flies in the face of conventional wisdoms. For instance, while one might well imagine that puppies need to eat significantly less than larger dogs, and while there's some degree of truth to this, they also need a richer caliber of food, one that supplies them with all the nutrients they need for their high-activity lifestyle. As a matter of fact, puppies usually expend twice the average amount of calories in a day that grown dogs do!

This paradox is only the tip of the iceberg where the proper diet for puppies is concerned. There are a lot of other considerations that one must be mindful of, making the feeding of puppies probably the most complex job that a dog owner will ever come across.

There's some pretty standard advice, however, that seems to get the job done, and should be of help to the average puppy owner who is confused about what to do. First of all, bear in mind the credentials of the AAFCO that we mentioned above. Buying only food that has been tested and approved by the AAFCO is a great idea as, at the very least, it will help you to make the judgment that your puppy is receiving decent nutrition.

Next, look for a high quality premium puppy food that is fairly high in protein content, somewhere in the range of 25 to 30 percent. Of course, bear in mind the different sources of protein that can be divined from an ingredients list. A food that has 25 percent protein but lists chicken as its primary ingredient is probably better than a food that has 30 percent protein but lists assorted bone meal as its main ingredient!

Next, when feeding your puppy it's probably a good idea to make their food, at least for a while, into a kind of porridge by adding warm water or a good quality milk formula for dogs to it. While it's important that older dogs have

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the grain of kibble in order to clean their teeth, for puppies, it's more critical that they have easy digestion.

For the first 5-6 months, puppies should be fed three to four times a day. This might seem like a lot, but remember that their bodies are constantly growing and in dire need of nutrition.

The amount to feed your puppy can vary wildly depending on the size of the breed. It's best to consult with your veterinarian on this matter, but there will still be some variation with individual dogs. In order to avoid over or under feeding, keep in mind the following formula for how quickly puppies should be growing:

For every kg of the anticipated adult weight, a healthy puppy will gain 2-4 grams per day, for the period of their first 5 months. For example, if a puppy is expected to weight 10 kg as an adult, it should be gaining 20-40 grams a day for the first 5 months, whereas if it's expected to weight 2kg as an adult, it should gain somewhere between 4 and 8 grams a day.

By the time puppies are about 6 months old, they can go onto a different feeding schedule of twice a day, and gradually adjust to a regular adult diet.

ADULTS

The dietary needs for adult dogs will vary dog to dog depending upon condition, size, and breed. In general, the aim of adult dog food should be the continued maintenance of well being for the immune system, skin, coat and muscles.

Adult dogs will be eating less often than their puppies, averaging two servings a day; some breeds will only need one serving a day. It is vital to ensure that your dog is meeting all of the nutritional requirements at each meal to keep it healthy and happy. Routine is also important and allows your dog's digestion system a sense of regularity. With a stable routine, your dog's body will come to expect meals at the appointed time which will help the digestion process and even his mental health. When deciding what time to feed your dog, take into consideration your own daily habits and choose times that will allow you to follow through with the plan each and every day. In time, you and your dog will fall into habit reducing stress and making life much easier for both.

Now, with your dog coming into adulthood, you will have to change the food from puppy chow to a food formulated for older dogs. This should start around the one year mark for your puppy. Changing foods should be done carefully and with great care and consideration. Pay close attention to your dog's likes, dislikes, and attitude toward the new food. When choosing the

new food, make sure that it contains the six major nutrient groups which will provide your dog with a healthy diet. These groups are the proteins, fats and oils, minerals, water, carbohydrates, and vitamins that can be found listed on the Guaranteed Analysis on the dog food package.

It is also important to consider your dog's special needs and circumstances while choosing an adult formulated food. Breed and size are two factors as well as any health issues and if your dog is active or inactive. Smaller breeds metabolize much faster than larger breeds and will need twice the calories. Larger breeds will need to eat more and will also need food that helps strengthen their bones and joints. Active dogs will need food with high levels of fat which will not help the inactive dog.

No matter what food you choose, make sure that it will meet your dog's dietary needs. Remember that the feeding recommendations below and those found on other food's labels are merely guidelines. You, as the owner, will be the first to know if your dog is benefiting from the diet or that adjustments are needed. And, as always, do not hesitate to consult with your veterinarian if you should have any questions or concerns.

SENIORS

Senior dogs require nutrients and a diet suited to their advanced age and biological systems. A high quality diet which caters to the dog's mature metabolism will be important. Senior dogs especially need these higher quality ingredients in order to make up for any of the dog's own short falls.

Dogs, much like humans, require special attention as they age. Providing this attention and care will increase the longevity and well being of your pet. Starting from puppy hood, the diet of your dog helps to build a foundation of health. With a sturdy foundation, your dog will be able to live through his adult life and into his senior life with the greatest possible health.

As the dog approaches five to seven years, special care in his diet will need to be taken. Most dog breeds see a decrease in metabolism during this time and an increase in the need for certain vitamins to help keep bones and joints strong. Obesity is often a concern for older dogs and should not be taken lightly. Obese dogs are prone to several health concerns and these concerns are doubled if the dog is advance in years.

There are many wonderful foods available on the market for senior dogs. Many commercial brands have a senior variant which is aimed at providing your older dog with the needed nutrients. There are many other factors that must change in order to provide your senior dog with a better lifestyle. Reducing stress is important so keep up the feeding routine and other routines in your dog's life.

Exercise is always important no matter the age or breed of your dog and while your older dog may not be able to sprint like he used to, moderate exercise will increase blood flow and help digestion. Along with veterinarian check ups and high quality food, you can provide your senior dog with the tools necessary to fully enjoy his golden years.

The brands of dog food in this book represent a mixture of the best in commercial foods along with a few brands that may not be available at local markets. The foods represent some of the best out on the market and in general will provide your dog, no matter the age, with the necessary nutrients for his diet. Senior dogs may have specialized needs depending upon their lifestyle and medical conditions so the foods listed below may not suit the dietary needs of your dog. If you have any questions consult your veterinarian.

PREGNANT DOGS

Pregnancy takes a great toll on the expectant mother's body and as such, she will need more nutrients. Those foods developed to promote growth, such as puppy food, will provide these nutrients and are recommended for many dogs in many brands. With this being the case, many of the top twelve brands of dog food promote their puppy food for pregnant dogs. Of course, take the mother to a veterinarian for regular check ups during pregnancy.

It is very important to make sure your pregnant dog has a balanced diet during these months and the months following for the mother and the puppy's sake. Puppy chow is often recommended for pregnant dogs as it has added nutrients that cater to a growing and changing body. You will also have to feed your pregnant dog more than once or twice a day as she will require more calories.

If your dog is not prone to weight gain then feed her as much as she wants. However, keep an eye on her weight, as overfeeding during pregnancy is a common problem. For the first six weeks, her food consumption should not differ all that much from normal; it is only after the sixth week that her appetite will increase. When her appetite drops or disappears around the ninth week then the puppies will be born within the next few days.

If the mother does not want to eat during the middle of the pregnancy, try moistening her food and give her positive encouragement to eat. Since the dog is going under so much change both emotionally and physically, she will need additional support.

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Along with a fortified diet, exercise is vital. Exercising will keep the mother in top shape which will help the mother be able to properly provide nutrients and care to the puppies.

The foods in this book may not be specifically directed for pregnant dogs, however, they are the top of their kind and will either provide the dog with the nutrients she needs or give you some idea of what to look for in brands. Always consult with your veterinarian regarding any choices you make for your dog especially during pregnancy.

It is important to consult with your veterinarian concerning any food for any life stage. Puppies, adults, seniors, and pregnant dogs all require their own specialized diets in order to maintain proper health.

While the information provided in this section meets all AAFCO standards, remember that only you and your veterinarian know your dog well enough to determine what is proper to meet the dietary concerns of your pet.

The foods listed here and in the book overall, represent the best in commercial brands along with a few others in order to give you an understanding of how wide reaching and important dog nutrition is. Make proper determination of what to feed your dog and how much by taking in such variable as age, weight, life stage, and medical conditions. Pay close attention to your pet's eating habits and consult a veterinarian whenever a concern presents itself. Remember, your dog is your best friend so treat him or her with the respect and care they deserve.

7

SPECIAL DIETS



Along with special diets for different life stages, such as puppies or seniors, diets will vary due to other factors such as illness and allergies. When you have a dog with such factors, it is vital to properly feed your pet with the right foods and with food that contains high quality products which will ensure the continued health of your dog.

SPECIAL DIETS FOR SICK DOGS

It is a sad day when you find out that your beloved companion is sick, but it does not have to be devastating. Many ailments such as diabetes and allergies are manageable with the correct diet. Keeping these ailments under control will allow the dog to continue a healthy and long life.

DIABETES:

Diabetes changes lives, no matter if a human or a dog is the one diagnosed. A diabetic dog, much like a diabetic human, will need drastic and immediate change in their diet to keep their diabetes in check, along with insulin and whatever else the veterinarian deems necessary.

A healthy diet is important for your dog to keep blood sugar levels in check and to stave off any harmful effects from the diabetes.

There are specialized foods formulated for dogs with diabetes, and these may be a good idea for your dog, but consult a veterinarian before switching.

It will be important to keep the quantity and type of food the same every day as the insulin provided for the dog will be matched to these factors.

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Feeding the dog two or three times a day will help keep blood sugar level in check.

Keep a watchful eye on the dog's behavior. Drinking more water than usual can be a sign that the insulin levels need to be adjusted. Contact a veterinarian if this happens.

Along with exercise and the proper medications, a diabetic dog will be a happy and healthy dog.

ALLERGIES:

While so much attention is paid to humans and their allergens, many of us forget, or just do not know, that animals have allergies of their own. And while they may not be allergic to us, as we are allergic to them at times, these allergies can be dangerous if not monitored.

More often than not, allergies that dogs develop are food allergies. These symptoms of itchy skin, inflamed eyes, runny nose, are caused by diet. It is important to consult with your veterinarian if you suspect your pet has developed allergies, as the vet will be able to pinpoint the culprit and suggest what to feed the dog to alleviate these allergic reactions.

There are specialized foods for pets with allergies, so when you have pinpointed what food or environmental factor is affecting your pet, you will be able to purchase dog food accordingly. Until then, the best line of defense is knowledge and reading the labels. Once you find out what is causing the allergic reactions, write it down and take it with you when you shop. Compare dog foods until you find one that your pet can eat. While this sounds tedious, the reward will be a great one: a happy, healthy pup.

Making your own dog food is another option. This will allow you to control what goes into the dog bowl. This option, however, takes time and careful preparation and may not be ideal for everyone, especially those with hectic on-the-go schedules.

In the end, it is about finding a product that will not cause your dog's allergies to act up. There are medications available for you dog but changing diets and eliminating allergens is often the best course of action.

DERMATITIS:

This condition can be caused by any number of factors such as allergic, neurogenic, and nutritional.

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Nutritional dermatitis is usually a result of poor quality food and the dog having a severe reaction to it. It is important to feed your dog with a high quality meat-based product. Even supplements in the dog's diet will alleviate this problem. The results and change after switching over to a healthier and higher quality diet will be impressive and welcome change for that itchy dog.

There are several other health problems that can and are related to your dog's diet. It is important to have a veterinarian check out your pet in order to assess and diagnosis the dog and change diets immediately.

Dogs can not eat anything and feel no ill effects. They need a regulated and sometimes specialized diet, much like most of their owners. With this in mind, make sure to meet any needs and requirements for your dog.

WET VERSUS DRY FOODS

This choice is often dictated by price as dry dog foods tend to be the cheaper option when compared to the canned foods. There are owners who believe, sometimes wrongfully so, that the wet foods are better in quality due to their expensive price tag. Seeing wet foods as "gourmet" does not mean that it is better in a dietary sense. So what are the advantages of one over the other?

Dry food works best for people who leave their food down all the time (free choice) because it won't dry out when left sitting for long periods. It's also less expensive per meal than canned, too. But, hey, some pets can be really picky eaters.

Some will only eat certain flavors or brands of food. Others will eat only dry food, and still others will eat only wet food. By the way, unless your dog is a self-regulator (meaning he only eats to feel full and then quits), free choice isn't a great idea as it often leads to obesity.

Most dry dog foods are corn, soybean or rice based. Some of the better brands, however, have meat or fish meal as the first listed ingredient(s). Although higher priced, nutritionally speaking, they are worth checking out.

Dry dog foods have greater caloric density – meaning there is less water in a cup of food as compared to a canned food diet. This isn't really an issue for smaller dogs, but your larger dog will have a problem eating enough volume of canned food to fulfill their caloric needs because they get a lot of water in the food. Generally speaking, larger dogs, meaning those that weigh over 30 pounds (13.60 kg), should be fed a dry or semi-moist food.

Usually the only difference between the dry and canned versions of food is generally the water content. Another advantage of canned food is that it is very digestible and most do not contain preservatives. Dry food is very good

for the teeth, but does not get rid of tartar. For that, you brush their teeth and offer your dog acceptable things to chew on.

VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN DOG FOODS

These dietary options are not just for humans. For those unaware of the difference between vegetarianism and veganism, vegetarianism excludes any meat product from a diet, such as animal flesh, poultry, fish, and animal by-products. Veganism is the exclusion of any and all animal products from the diet and lifestyle, including items made from animals, either for consumption or other purposes.

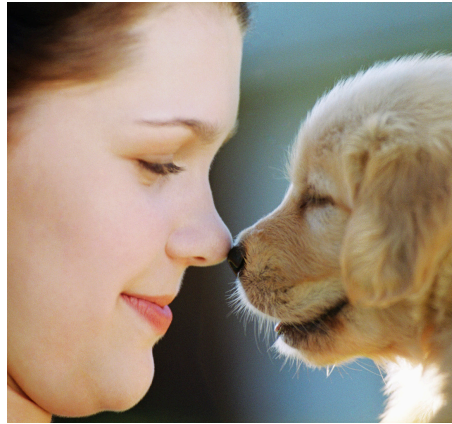
When thinking about switching to either a vegetarian or vegan diet for you pet, it will be necessary to consult your veterinarian. The important thing to remember with this type of diet is that it needs to be **BALANCED** and still contain all the important mineral and vitamin supplements required by a dog.

It is interesting to note that most vegan sites will also include a note that says: "After switching dogs to a vegetarian diet, watch for chronic gastrointestinal problems, and note any new health problems." Most dogs' health improves on a vegetarian diet, but occasionally an animal may not thrive, so use common sense if this occurs.

Vegetarian and vegan commercial foods can be useful for an allergic dog that cannot tolerate common sources of animal protein or fat. Although the instance of food allergies in dogs isn't great, it does happen. The owner can add specific canned or fresh meat types and has control over the amount added.

8

DOG FOOD SUPPLEMENTS AND ADDITIVES



TYPICAL SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements are commonly used by many people today to help boost and enrich diets. Pet owners also see the benefits of adding supplements to their dog's diet, though this course of action should be discussed with a veterinarian. Most healthy dogs will not need supplements, but dogs with specialized needs and owners using the BARF diet for their dogs may prefer that extra boost that supplements can provide.

As you read through this section, remember that supplements are often times very specialized and you will need to discuss any choice you make with your veterinarian.

A popular supplement can be found in garlic powder. Garlic contains organic allyl sulfur components - S-allyl cysteine and other cysteine derivatives like S-alkyl cysteine sulfoxides. These components are responsible for many of

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its anticancer, antibiotic, anti-lipid and anti-diabetic properties. Pretty powerful stuff, isn't it?

Those who advocate giving garlic to dogs point to garlic protecting against cancer, enhancing immunity and reducing the formation of athero-sclerotic plaques and thrombi. It has even been found to be beneficial in reducing cholesterol levels, and lower blood sugar levels. Raw garlic is antibacterial and anti-fungal. This action, however, is lost when garlic is cooked or dried. TIP: Dry ginger is also a good anti-inflammatory. Together with garlic, dry ginger can replace the need for aspirin-like (NSAID) drugs.

However, there are claims that garlic is actually harmful or even deadly to dogs and should be avoided at all costs. Garlic contains, along with whatever beneficial components, thiosulphate. This sulphate is responsible for a condition that causes the dog's red blood cells to burst.

The condition is called haemolytic anemia and is deadly. Some symptoms of haemolytic anemia are vomiting, reddish urine, and breathlessness. There is no direct evidence that there's a correlation between dogs consuming garlic and suffering from this disease, but it bears mentions for concerned owners.




When choosing to feed your dog any human food or supplements such as garlic, you must consult your veterinarian. There are two sides to every coin and garlic clove. Keep this in mind if you choose to use it to supplement your dog's diet.

A few more ways raw unprocessed but pasteurized garlic supposedly helps your dog are for skin boils and other bacterial infections. Crush a bulb of garlic and extract the juice. Apply it on the infected areas. Wound healing with take place within a week.

Using a raw, unprocessed (not preserved in any way) clove of garlic, mash it well and add it to your pet's food daily. Large dog – ½ clove. Small dog – ¼ clove. This helps prevent cancer, tone the circulation, and purify the blood.

This helps keep dogs from having worms and gets rid of them if he or she already has them. It keeps fleas and ticks off dogs because neither bug likes the smell of garlic. This actually works for horses to keep stable flies and other gnats away. Your dog doesn't smell like garlic to a human, by the way.

The easiest way to give garlic is by liquid. Either spray or pour it on the food, and mix well. The researched recommended daily dose seems to be:

-  5-20 lb. dogs - 4 sprays or 1/4 ounce in food daily.
-  21-50 lb. dogs - 6 sprays into food and mix well.
-  51 lbs. and over dogs 8 sprays into food and mix well.

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Now, if you think the doses are too high, then opt to do what many breeders, vets and animal lovers do: feed the dog. In other words, just give them what they seem to tolerate. Actually, it would be best for you to just start off slowly with smaller amounts if this is what you would like to try for your dog.

For those on the BARF diet and who may want to use supplements or for those wanting to learn more about common supplements, there is a well spring of knowledge out there, either through your veterinarian or on the internet. Previously, we discussed a few BARF-appropriate supplements above, in the section on the BARF diet.

[SPECIAL NEEDS AND SUPPLEMENTS](#)

Supplements have many uses, especially if your dog has any kind of special need caused by medical conditions or conditions caused by the breed of your dog. When considering any supplements, consult with your veterinarian who will be able to provide further information and advice.

Since dogs are so different from one another, they will respond differently to the supplements you provide. So pay attention to the dog's appetite, habits, and temperament while on supplements.

Below are some special needs and the supplements that can help.

[ARTHRITIS AND JOINT PROBLEMS](#)

As dogs age they experience some of the same problems humans do. Arthritis and joint problems afflict a large percentage of senior dogs. There are many supplements available to help deal with and counteract the effects of these problems.

Glucosamine is a supplement that can be injected orally or through injections. It is unknown if glucosamine prevents arthritis but it has shown to help rebuild cartilage and restore joint fluid.

Anti-Inflammatories may be a problem for some dogs and fish oil is a popular supplement to help correct the issue.

Other Anti Inflammatories include: Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Yucca, and Hawthorn.

[HEART DISEASE](#)

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Heart Disease may be a problem for your pet, but there are several supplements that will help improve the heart and keep it ticking for a long time to come.

L-carnitine is a popular supplement that boosts the heart's strength. It is an amino acid that has shown to be effective in most breeds.

Taurine is another amino acid. In fact some dogs suffer from heart disease due to a lack of taurine in their diet.

Supplements for your dog come in all shapes, sizes, and types and will help an array of problems. However, there may be negative side effects to some of these supplements if they are not taken correctly. A veterinarian will be able to help you decide what kind and how much of a supplement is needed.

VITAMINS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

There are many different types of vitamins which have a variety of different functions and benefits from digestion to a healthy coat. Vitamins and nutrients are essential for your dog's health.

There are two types of vitamins based on how they are stored in the body; fat-soluble which are stored in the liver and fatty tissue and water-soluble which are stored in small amounts and need to be ingested daily.

FAT SOLUBLE VITAMINS

Vitamin	Recommended Minimum Daily Dose* Dose for Dogs	Toxic Dose*	Sources	Signs of Deficiencies
A	50 IU/lb. or 2225 IU per lb. of food consumed	2500 IU/lb.	Liver, fish oil, vegetables, dairy products	Night blindness, retarded growth, poor quality skin and hair
D	5 IU/lb. or 225 IU per lb. of food consumed	50 IU/lb.	Sunshine, dairy products, fisher liver oil	Rickets, poor eruption of permanent teeth
E	2-20 IU per day	none	Cold pressed vegetable oils, meats, nuts, green leafy vegetables	Reproductive failure, brown bowel syndrome
K	Synthesized in thenone body	none	Kelp, alfalfa, egg yolk	Increased clotting time and hemorrhage

***This dose must be given daily for months to create toxicity.**

WATER SOLUBLE VITAMINS

<i>Vitamin</i>	<i>Recommended Minimum Daily Dose for Dogs</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Signs of Deficiencies</i>
C	Not required, synthesized in the liver of healthy dogs	Citrus fruits and vegetables	Slowed healing, increased susceptibility to disease
Vitamin B1 (Thiamin)	.01 mg/lb.	Plants, fruit, vegetables, milk, meat	Loss of appetite, loss of reflexes, loss of nerve control, weakness
Niacin	.12 mg/lb.	Meat, meat by-products	Loss of appetite and weight, inflamed gums, hemorrhagic diarrhea
Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)	.05 mg/lb.	Organ meats and dairy products	Poor growth, eye abnormalities, heart failure

Other essential items to your dog's health include fatty acids such as Omega 6 and 3.

OMEGA 6 & 3 INFORMATION

Essential fatty acids mean first of all that they are essential to the body health of your dog (or human for that matter) but cannot be made in the body. That means they have to be found in foods. Both of these acids play a critical role in brain function and normal growth and development, stimulating skin and hair growth, maintaining bone health, regulating metabolism, and maintaining reproductive capability. Omega 6 & 3 belong to the class of essential fatty acids called polyunsaturated fatty acids.

There are several different types of omega-6 fatty acids consumed in the diet from vegetable oils as linoleic acid (NOT alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid). Linoleic acid is found in corn, soy, canola, safflower and sunflower oil, whole grains, body fat of poultry (chicken, turkey, duck etc.). It is converted to gamma-linolenic acid and then further broken down to arachidonic acid, found in found in the body fat of poultry, lean meat, egg yolks and some fish oils.

Arachidonic acid can also be consumed directly from meat, and gamma-linolenic acid can be ingested from several plant-based oils including evening primrose oil, borage oil, and black currant seed oil. Something we already covered a bit earlier in this section. But it's always handy to know how things work when it comes to feeding your dog the barf diet, or considering

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feeding him barf. And, a further bit of information. Dihomogamma linolenic acid, found in organ meats like spleen, kidney and adrenals is metabolized from gamma linolenic acid.

The Omega 3 oils come in three kinds. Alpha linolenic acid found in flaxseed oil and to a lesser extent, canola, soy, and walnut oils. Eicosapentaenoic acid found in cold water fish and their oil and Docosahexaenoic acid found in cold water fish and their oil.

Important Note: Omega 3 fatty acids oxidize rapidly and increase antioxidant requirements in the body. If you supplement, you should make sure the product you feed either has vitamin E added, or supply a vitamin E supplement separately.

There are many benefits to Omega 6 and Omega 3. Seek the advice of your veterinarian before choosing a supplement. Some of the benefits of these supplements include improvement and upkeep of the immune system. Providing nourishment to the skin and coat is another welcomed benefit.

These supplements have been used to treat allergies in dogs but are now used for other ailments such as kidney disease, arthritis, and high cholesterol. In some cases, dogs with cancer have seen improvement in their health and well being after being administered with Omega 3.

The helpful effects of these supplements will not manifest immediately. It may take up to four months before you see any improvement.

9

SNACKS AND TREATS



Snacks and treats are an important part of your interaction with your pet. We use snacks to reinforce good behavior and as a reward for tricks. Any snack or treat given to your dog should be healthy in nature and have some kind of beneficial result such as aiding in cleaning teeth; rawhides and beef jerky specially designed for dogs are a great way to do this.

While people do use table scraps as treats, it is often not recommended as these scraps do not provide the needed dietary benefits.

Purina Beggin' Strips is a popular dog snack on the market and contains healthy ingredients.

Another alternative is to make your own dog treats. This option is a fun way to interact with your pet and a chance to make something in the kitchen that you would not necessarily make.

Two examples are as follows:

BONGO'S BISCUITS

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups whole wheat flour
- 2 tsp powdered garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sesame seeds
- Rind of 1 orange
- 12 tsp butter (don't use margarine it's mostly water)

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- ½ tsp vanilla extract

Combine all the ingredients. Knead until well blended. Divide into 6 parts. Roll each into a log. Wrap loosely in wax paper. Freeze.

When needed, thaw and slice into 1/2 thick slices (across roll).

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Place cookies on an ungreased cookie pan. Bake about 12 minutes. Makes 6-8 cookies per roll.

BEANIE'S BIKKIES

- 3 ½ cups plain flour
- 2 cups Quaker oats
- 1-cup milk
- ½ cup hot water
- 2 beef or chicken bouillon cubes
- ½ cup meat drippings (beef, chicken, lamb or turkey)
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Pinch ginger

Before you start making this recipe, make sure you check there is no onion in the bouillon cubes. Best to be safe even if it is only a small amount.

Dissolve the cubes in hot water. Add your milk and the meat drippings and beat.

In a separate bowl, mix flour and oatmeal. Then, pour liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix well. Press onto an ungreased cookie sheet and cut into shapes desired.

Bake at 300 degrees F for 1 hour. Turn off heat and leave in the oven to harden. Refrigerate after baking.

TABLE SCRAPS

Now, there are many people who will claim that table scraps are deadly to your pet and should not be given as snacks. These people are only partially correct. While commercial snacks are formulated for the needs of your pet, there is no harm in allowing your dog some table scraps as long as it is not harmful to the dog and is not in excess. There are human foods that are harmful and deadly to your dog, but most human food is perfectly acceptable for dogs. The trick is research.

Easily digestible foods such as cooked rice or chicken and turkey (boneless) will be fine to feed your dog. Even some fruits and vegetables are well

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received by dogs, though there are some types to avoid such as grapes and onions.

Table scraps should not be the main source of dietary intake for your dog but as small treats here and there. Harmful table scraps like chocolate and bones can cause extensive harm and even death to your pet. Digestive problems do occur when dogs eat table scraps that are too rich or that simply do not agree with their stomachs. Be wary of what table scraps you allow your dog to have and never overdo it.

As always, consult with your veterinarian if you have any concerns or questions about snacks. Always read the label and follow instructions for store bought brands as this will lead you to the higher quality treats. It is also important to remember that these are treats and not intended to act as a stand along meal. Use snacks and treats sparingly as to avoid over feeding.

10 DANGERS IN THE DOG'S DIET



Of course, a healthy diet will have many benefits to your beloved pet, but not all dogs are suited for all diets. It is, however, easy to spot problems with the diet as long as you are aware of the signs and know what they mean and what the leading cause of the symptoms may be.

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS RELATED TO DIET

Listed below are just some examples of the common health problems your dog may have. These problems are most likely related to their diet and if your dog is exhibiting sign of these problems, it may be time to change their food to something that they can digest and stand.

GAS:

When it is really the dog's fault, excess gas should be looked into and a trip to the veterinarian may be in store. There is no clear cut reason for excess gas, but most of the time, it is due to the diet. Take a look at the dog's entire diet including snacks and treats. It could simply be that your dog has an allergy to the diet in which case a simple change will solve the issue.

Another source can be the fact that the dog is eating a food with inferior quality ingredients that he is simply having a hard time digesting. Just remember to switch foods gradually, or you are liable to create an even worse problem.

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DIARRHEA:

Diarrhea is caused by any number of things including stress, food, and parasites. It is important to identify the cause of the diarrhea and then treat it as dehydration can result. Consulting a veterinarian is advisable if the diarrhea lasts for more than a couple of days.

Diarrhea is often encountered during diet transitions. Another likely source is that the dog has eaten a foreign object or too much grass.

ANAL GLAND DISEASE:

The anal glands are located on either side of the anal opening. There is a duct that leads under the skin to the opening which is beside the anus. It is possible for these ducts to become impacted. A symptom of anal gland disease is when the dog scoots along the carpet or surface of the floor on his rear end.

In order to treat this disease, a high fiber diet is often recommended in order to unclog what is clogged. There are specialized brands of food that is high in fiber as well as medication that a veterinarian can prescribe.

There are other problems that dogs may encounter such as constipation, diabetes, and even malnutrition. These can all result from a poor or inadequate diet which can be solved by changing the food along with the addition of supplements.

FOODS TO AVOID

To put it plainly, dogs can not eat everything and anything. In fact, there are many everyday items that are toxic to dogs. The fact is, if you limit your dog to items that you know for certain are safe you should have no problems. Of course, dogs will from time to time get into the garbage, come across some table scraps, and encounter people who willing give them 'human food'. In these cases, it is important to understand what adverse effects will manifest in the dog, how to recognize it, and potentially treat it, should problems arise.

Of course, even dog foods can contain ingredients that are hazardous to your dog and that should be avoided. This can be done by being informed and reading the label.

DANGEROUS INGREDIENTS FOUND IN DOG FOODS

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Ethoxyquin

Used as a preservative in some dog foods, it is also used as a herbicide. Effects of ethoxyquin include but are not limited to: Kidney damage, liver damage, loss of hair, and leukemia.

Butylated-hydroxyanisole/butylated hydroxytoluene (BHA/BHT)

These are preservatives found in most dog foods, except for the natural brands and the higher quality brands. There are no tests in dog foods to show their effects, but these chemicals are known to be carcinogenic to humans.

Propylene Glycol

Known to cause intestinal blockage and other digestive tract problems.

Keeping a watchful eye on what you feed or dog is the first line of defense in preventing harmful ingredients to reaching your dog's food bowl.

DANGEROUS HUMAN FOODS

It should be common sense not to feed your dog human food. However, there are people who do this because they think it's perfectly harmless or adorable to see their pet eating food that is normally used for humans.

Chocolate

This is toxic to animals and should never be fed to your dog under any circumstances. If your dog has eaten chocolate, take it to the vet immediately. Sometimes, symptoms will not manifest until hours later and often times it is too late to do anything. Chocolate contains theobromine which is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic and is deadly to dogs.

Macadamia nuts and other types of nuts

These can cause bladder stones due to the high phosphorus content. Macadamia nuts are known to cause tremors in skeletal muscles and weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters.

Milk and Dairy

Since dogs do not have the needed lactase to break up the lactose the result can be diarrhea.

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Raw Eggs

An enzyme called avidin which is found in raw eggs causes hair and skin problems along with the possibility of Salmonella poisoning.

Alcoholic Beverages

Even humans aren't really suited for ingesting alcohol, so why would dogs be? Dogs have severe reactions to alcohol which, at worse cause death and at best causes coma. Stick to water when it comes to beverages for dogs.

Bones

Turkey bones, chicken bones, and bones from other animals can cause obstruction in the dog's digestive tract. This can lead to a problem where immediate surgery is needed. Bones can also cut the roof of the mouth and the digestive tract.

Grapes

Feeding your dog grapes causes severe kidney damage. While some fruits are acceptable to feed your pet, avoid grapes at all times.

Liver

In large amounts, liver causes a toxicity that affects the bones and muscles.

Marijuana

Another example of a harmful substance humans use that should never be given to an animal. Marijuana has been known to cause vomiting in dogs and rapid changes in heart rate that can be dangerous.

Raw Fish

Has been known to cause a thiamine deficiency. As a result the dog will suffer from seizures and possibly death.

Ham and Bacon

Can cause pancreatitis due to the high levels of salt and fat. In extreme cases eating ham and bacon leads to a condition called Bloat where the stomach becomes full of gas and twists within several hours which leads to death.

Pennies

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While the likelihood of your dog eating a penny is slight, the adverse effects are so great that it is worth mentioning. Pennies from the 1980's to present day contain zinc which, if ingested, causes kidney failure.

Tomatoes

Tomato plants as well as the actual tomato are highly dangerous to dogs. Ingesting a tomato or any part of the plant can lead to tremors and heart arrhythmia.

Walnut

Should be avoided at all times. Walnuts are very poisonous to dogs. For each instance of a dog consuming a human food product, a trip to the veterinarian may be required and is advisable to determine the severity of the situation. Sometimes, simply waiting for the symptoms to pass will suffice, but this should not be risked as your dog's health is on the line.

It always pays to be safe rather than sorry, so avoid foods that you are simply not sure of. Dogs should stick with dog food as a source of their nutrition. Human foods can be used as treats, but sparingly, and always discuss this option with your veterinarian.

Remember, just because you do not see a food listed above does not mean that it is safe for your dog to ingest. This is only a small list; there are countless human foods that are harmful and potentially deadly to your pet.

CONCLUSION

This book has covered a lot of information, all of which is crucial to the continuing health of your dog. Your pet can not tell you that it is not receiving enough nutrition or vitamins, or that the food you are feeding him contains poisons. You will have to read the labels, know what to look for, and compare brands in order to make an informed decision concerning the diet of your dog.

Premium dog foods such as Artemis Maximal and Wellness CORE™ dog food, along with the other listed, provide examples of what dog foods should contain. Lower grade dog foods with inferior quality ingredients are damaging to your dog's digestive system, along with their overall health and well being, and should be avoided. You cannot afford to buy whatever food is the cheapest, as this cheapens the health of your dog.

Other diets such as the BARF diet will help improve the health of your dog while giving you control over what you put in the bowl.

Always be on the lookout for symptoms that will tell you if your dog is not meeting dietary needs and requirements.

It is vital to your dog's health that you remain informed and up to date about dog food and new protocols released by AAFCO.

Above all else, the key factor in deciding on what to feed your dog is to improve his or her health.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Dog Food Analysis

<http://www.dogfoodanalysis.com>

Dog Food Project

<http://www.dogfoodproject.com>

The Nibble Reviews

<http://www.thenibble.com/reviews/main/pets/dogswell-treats.asp>

Marquis Diamond Standard Poodles

<http://www.marquisdiamondstandardpoodles.com/RawDiet.html>

Everything about Old English Sheepdogs

http://www.oes.org/page2/1342~Dog_Food_--_Whole_Dog_Journal.html

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