

Dog Food: How do I know what is best?

Nutrition for dogs is important, as a high quality diet will help keep your new pet healthy. Just like with people, eating poorly can cause poor health and obesity, and, in animals, a poor coat. A nutritious diet can help prevent health problems. High quality foods may cost more, but could save you trips to the vet and ensure your pet gets to stay healthy as long as possible.

Dogs are carnivores, and a species appropriate diet must be based on meat, as they have little need of carbohydrates in their diet. Grains are in pet food because they're cheaper than meat products, and are needed to create kibble. Some grain is appropriate for dogs unless you notice any specific allergy issues.

You can tell a lot about the quality of a pet food simply by looking at the list of ingredients on the side of the bag or box.

Look for:

- ★ Meat and fat products that are identified by species, such as “deboned salmon meal, chicken meal, duck, beef” If the species is not identified (i.e., ingredients include “meat”, “poultry” or “fish” products) then you can’t be sure of the quality.
- ★ Specific meats & by-products listed as a “_____meal” This means the nutrition from the animal has been condensed, so your pooch gets more good stuff per piece of kibble. Meat by-products are okay for dogs, however, a by-product meal is best. If my dogs ate a fresh rabbit they would go first for the innards (including the stomach and intestines). Therefore, I have no problems feeding my dogs a food with by- products. Just because I wouldn’t eat it, doesn’t mean my dogs wouldn’t.
- ★ Foods with meat as the very first ingredient(s). Carnivorous animals like dogs will find foods high in meat protein easier to digest and absorb.
- ★ When grains are used, look for high quality whole grains such as “whole brown rice.”
- ★ Whole fruits and vegetables, especially as replacement for grains in food, high up on the ingredients list.
- ★ Microorganism probiotics
- ★ Fiber 3% or more
- ★ Moisture content around 10%
- ★ Eggs are also a good form of protein.

Avoid:

- Artificial colours, flavours, sweeteners or preservatives, especially BHT, BHA, Ethoxyquin, Propyl Gallate.
- Corn *gluten* meal (it’s the Gluten that is difficult to digest, ground corn has more nutritional value)
- Corn in various forms listed more than once
- Grocery stores and large outlet stores are generally not good sources of quality pet food, with the exception of the Costco Kirkland Brand.

We provide you with a small amount of the diet we feed here and recommend you transition your dog to the food of your choice slowly. Start with a mixture of 25% new food and 75% old food, and over the course of five days transition to 100% new food.



How can I easily determine which brand to use?

Choose a brand with a rating of A-C depending on your budget. Avoid D & F scores.

Find Your Food:

(please pay attention to Brand AND type)

RATING: A+

The Blue Buffalo Co: Blue Wilderness
Horizon: Legacy Adult
Innova Evo: Chicken
Orijen: Adult, Six Fish, Senior
Petcurean Go Natural: Grain Free Endurance
Taste of the Wild: High Prairie, Wetlands
Wellness: Core, Core Ocean

RATING: A

Acana: Grasslands, Pacifica, Prairie
Before Grain by Merrick: Buffalo, Chicken, Salmon
Fromm: Four Star Varieties
Petcurean Go Natural: Chicken, Wild Salmon
Innova: Adult
Merrick: Turducken, Wilderness Blend
Nature's Variety
Pinnacle: Peak Protein
Solid Gold: Barking at the Moon, Hundchen Flocken
Taste of the Wild: Pacific Stream
Timberwolf
Wellness: Super 5 Mix

RATING: B

Artemis: Holistic, AGARx Immune Support
Blue Buffalo: Chicken, Buffalo, Fish, Lamb and SP
The Blue Buffalo Co: Blue Organics
Blue Seal Feeds by Nature: Organics, Natural Active
California Natural: Chicken, Lamb, Herring and SP
Eagle Pack Holistic Select: Fish, Chicken, Lamb, Duck
Flint River Ranch: Lamb, Premium Fish
Fromm: Gold
Innova: Large Breed Adult
Merrick: Campfire Trout, Cowboy Cookout, Grammy's Pot Pie
Natural Balance
Pinnacle: Allergen Free Duck and Potatoe, Chicken and Oats
Solid Gold: Hund-N-Flocken, Just A Wee Bit, Millenia, Wolfking
Wellness: Fish and Sweet Potatoe, Simple Solutions, SuperMix Senior

RATING: C

Authority: Harvest Baked
AvoDerm: Natural Brown Rice, Oatmeal and Chicken,
Back to Basics: Chicken
Blue Buffalo: Senior, Lite
California Natural: Low Fat Varieties
Canidae: Platinum
Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul: Senior, Large Breed, Light
Dog Whisperer
Drs Foster and Smith: Adult Chicken, Lamb, Senior, Puppy
Fromm: Classic
Innova: Low Fat, Senior
Kirkland's Signature: Chicken, Lamb
Natural Balance: Lamb, Reduced Calorie, Vegetarian
Nutro: Ultra Holistic

RATING: D

AKC: Natural Pet Food
Authority: Adult, Puppy, Lite
AvoDerm Natural: Beef, Vegetarian
Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul: Light
Hill's Prescription Diets
Nature's Best: All Varieties
Nutro Max: All Varieties
Nutro Natural: All Varieties
Pro Plan: Selects, Sensitive Skin
Purina Vet Diets
Rachel Ray: Nutrish
Royal Canin: Brrred Specific, Vet RX Diets

RATING: F

Alpo
Beneful
Bil Jac
Eukanuba
Goodlife Recipe
Hill's Science Diet
Iams: Proactive, Prescription Diet
Kibbles N Bits
Ol Roy
Pedigree
Purina: Dog Chow, Puppy Chow, Fit & Trim, ONE, Natural Blends, Veterinary Diets

****This is a GENERAL rating system only! Individual dogs may do better on a lower rated food. Decide what's best for YOUR dog****