



## Everything You Ever Needed to Know About Dog Food and a Little More

A guide on how to pick out a great commercial dog food and  
how to keep it within your budget

## **INTRODUCTION**

First and the most important thing to remember is that dogs are carnivores. They need a good amount of meat in their diet in order to be their healthiest. See those sharp teeth they have? Those are for crunching bones and tearing flesh. If dogs were meant to eat lots of grains, fruits, and veggies they'd have flat molars like humans and bears. As it stands dog cannot breakdown the cell wall of plant matter because they do not have grinding teeth. Remember learning about the Brontosaurus and the Tyrannosaurus Rex? The main differences between the two dinosaurs were their teeth and diet. The Brontosaurus had flat teeth for eating and grinding plants, and the T-Rex had sharp teeth for eating meat. Dogs have the same kind of teeth as the T-Rex did. They are carnivores, not herbivores or omnivores. Carnivores need MEAT, not a bunch of plants. Okay, now we have that out of the way.

## **HOW TO PICK A MEATY KIBBLE**

The first step in picking out a wholesome kibble is to make sure there is plenty of meat in the food. For example, if chicken is listed as the first ingredient and there is no other meat listed, there isn't enough meat in the food. Here's why; all animals are made up of mostly water, and water is heavy. The ingredients on all bags of dog food are listed by weight. Once the chicken is cooked and all that water is taken out, the chicken weighs a whole lot less. So in reality, there is much less chicken meat in the food than there is of the other first 5 (or so) ingredients.

If chicken meal is listed as the first ingredient there is a probably good amount of meat in the food. Chicken meal is regular ole chicken meat that's already been cooked and its water has been taken out. You can think of chicken meal as similar to chicken jerky. Since it's already been cooked the weight of the chicken meal won't change during the kibble making process.

If you don't quite catch the meaning of that, here's an analogy to help out a little. Imagine the difference between one balloon filled with water that weighs 3 pounds, and 3 pounds worth of empty balloons. You have to have a lot of empty balloons to make three pounds, right? Well that's how it is with chicken and chicken meal. Chicken is full of water just like the water balloon. Once they cook the 3 pounds worth chicken to make kibble the chicken shrinks because all the water is out of it. It's like if you were to empty the water balloon. The amount of meat is hardly anything compared to already cooked 3 pounds of chicken meal, and the size of the empty water balloon is nothing compared to the 3 pounds of the empties.

Ideally you want a food that has both a whole meat and a meat meal. Although a meat meal (like chicken meal, beef meal, lamb meal, salmon meal, etc) is a good thing to find on your ingredient list, that stuff is overly cooked. Since it has spent so much time in the oven at really high temperatures, it has a lot of the nutrition cooked out of it. A regular meat source (like chicken, beef, lamb, salmon, etc) would have a more vitamins and

minerals compared to the meal form, but a meal provides a whole lot of meat based protein. That's why it's good to have both.

Take a moment to look at the guaranteed analysis of the dog food. The guaranteed analysis will help you get a better idea of the amount of meat (protein) in the food. Some foods have as little as 18% protein, and some as much as 42% protein. You want at least 22%. Really, that's still too low for a healthy dog. Studies have shown that dogs are more likely to have injuries when eating a diet with less than 25% protein. If you find a kibble that has a few meats and meat meals in the first few ingredients and 35% protein, you've probably found a good food. Remember that carnivores need meat! I can't stress that enough.

There is a lot of hoopla about high protein levels causing liver and kidney damage to dogs. That's pure bologna. Right now, there is no safe upper limit established for the percentage of protein in dog food. This means that tests so far show that no damage has been caused by dogs eating high protein (unless pre-existing damage or failure exists). The tests that originally showed damage from high protein were done on rats and the results were inferred to be the same for dogs. That inference however, makes no sense because dogs and rats are biologically different. That's like comparing apples to machine guns. Not the same whatsoever.

### **BY-PRODUCTS AND UGLY STUFF**

Now, you might scratching your head and wondering why the label on the back of the bag of your dog food doesn't actually say chicken or chicken meal but says chicken by-product meal. Well, as it turns out you haven't been feeding your dog much meat.

### **SPECIFIED MEAT BY-PRODUCTS**

The organization who is in charge of dog food, the AAFCO, thinks it is okay for your dog to eat by-products. Well, they are half right. Specified meat by-products are the dry, ground, rendered, parts of slaughtered animals. Depending on the animal (chicken, beef, pork, salmon, etc) these by-products include heads, necks, feet, intestines, bones, undeveloped eggs, connective tissues, and a whole slew of other stuff left over from human processing. If your dog was feral and had to hunt for herself this is all stuff she'd eat anyway, so no biggie right? Not really. Dogs need meat to be their healthiest. So if the kibble doesn't list a meat (like chicken or beef) or a meat meal (like salmon meal or lamb meal) and only has meat by-products, you aren't giving your pet carnivore much meat. By-products are hard to digest and most likely have been treated with a number of potentially harmful chemicals before they arrive at the kibble making facility.

### **UNSPECIFIED MEAT PRODUCTS**

Okay, now some of you are going "Hey, my bag of food doesn't even mention a specific animal. What gives?" If your bag of food has ingredients like poultry meal, fish meal, meat meal, liver meal, meat and bone meal, etc it's best to just throw that food away right

now. There is no telling what kind of animals are in that food. There could raccoon road kill, euthanized horses, or even cats and dogs in that food. That's right! There are no laws preventing companion animals being made into pet food. As sick as that is, it's the truth.

The AAFCO defines "meat meal" as "the rendered product from mammal tissues, with or without bone, exclusive of any added blood, hair, hoof, horn, hide trimmings, manure, stomach and rumen contents except in such amounts as may occur unavoidably in good processing practices."

Remember in the specified by-products part of the AAFCO definition said "...of slaughtered animals..."? Notice this definition does not say that. The unknown animals used to make this ingredient could have died with a horrible disease, been struck by an automobile on the highway, or who knows what. This is where companies use all that stuff that is 100% unfit for human consumption. Be it rotten, diseased, or whatever disgusting thing could have happened to the animal. It's important to mention these ingredients are guaranteed to have been treated with some kind of chemical agent for preservation purposes. More on those later.

Like was said before, if unspecified meat products are in your kibble...toss the stuff.

## **CARBOHYDRATES**

Next on the agenda are carbohydrates. There are many different sources of carbohydrates used in kibble. You want a food that uses WHOLE forms of carbohydrates. Whole forms of carbs have more nutritional value than fragments. The main reason dog food makers use fragments is to beef up the protein levels in the food. There isn't enough protein in the food because there isn't any meat.

Here's some examples of whole vs. fragment:  
 White Rice is whole, Brewers Rice is a fragment.  
 Potato is whole, Potato Product is a fragment.  
 Oatmeal is whole, Oat Hulls are fragments.

Do you see where I'm going with this? If there are extra words attached to the name of the carb, more often than not, it's a fragment. Besides, would you eat something called Potato Product? I think not.

If there is multiple carbohydrate sources in the food keep in mind that all those different carbs add up. If there are only one or two meat sources listed and five carbohydrate sources, there is a possibility that there are more carbs than meat in the food. Looking at the guaranteed analysis for protein levels will help ensure you don't pick a carby food.

## **FILLERS**

Fillers are just junky stuff no one uses so dog food makers throw it in food. It has no real nutritional value except as a source of fiber. Fiber is a good thing, but you can get fiber

from other sources like the white rice and oatmeal. Avoid ingredients like Corn Bran, Oat Hulls, Rice Hulls, Wheat Middlings, and Cellulose. Those are floor sweepings, seriously. There are other fillers that aren't so bad. A little doesn't hurt but if there are more than a couple fillers in the food it's probably best to avoid it. Some of the better fillers are Tomato Pomace, Apple Pomace, and Citrus Pulp. Just make sure there isn't a ton of that stuff in there. Remember that the ingredients on the bag are listed by weight so if a filler comes before a good ingredient, there is more filler than the good stuff.

## **FAT**

Fat is probably the second most important ingredient besides meat. Good healthy fats are essential to your dog's health. Okay, remember reading about the unspecified meat sources in the food. Well, there can be unspecified fat sources in the food too. If your ingredient list says poultry fat, it's an unspecified fat source. Yuck. If they aren't honest enough to list what kind of animal is in the food, then that company isn't going to get my business. If it says chicken fat then YAY! Chicken is chicken; we all know what that is. This goes for all types of fats not just chicken. If it says animal fat, that's no good. If it says pork fat then it's good. Get it? Knowing what species your dog is eating is important. No mystery meat (or fat in this case)!

## **OIL AS FAT**

Some companies use oils as their fat source. That's fine. I prefer oils made from animals (like Salmon Oil) as opposed to plant sources (like Flaxseed Oil or Canola Oil) because my dog (like your dog) is a carnivore. If your dog doesn't have a problem with plants oils (like allergies and such) then you're probably all right. Just make sure it doesn't say Vegetable Oil because that's unspecified and could have some scary stuff in there.

## **FLAVOR ENHANCERS**

Ha, it's pretty funny when you think about it. These low quality dog foods are so terrible they actually have to add flavor and smell to the kibble to make dogs want to eat it. Sure works though!

Tallow and Lard are two very bad forms of fat. These fats are nutritionally shallow. They aren't a good source of linoleic acid which is important to a dog's health, and are just there because they smell and taste appealing to canines. Avoid those ingredients.

You also want to look out for anything called digest. Digest is like a big stew of just about everything except the kitchen sink. They take whatever meat hunks they can find, throw it into a huge tub, and add caustic chemicals to it to break it down. Then they take that soupy mess and add it into the kibble or spray it on after the kibble is made. It has zero nutritional value and its presence on an ingredient list is proof that the food is crap.

Sugar, Sorbitol, Cane Molasses, Fructose, and Corn Syrup are all sweeteners. As yummy as candy and sweet stuff is, dogs don't need that junk. Sweeteners can lead to obesity, Diabetes, and tooth decay. It's not fun to be obese, sick, and toothless.

## **CHEMICALS**

Dog food is chalk full of chemicals and dogs have to eat these chemical ridden foods everyday. Chemicals can build up in their bodies overtime and cause sickness.

You want to avoid artificial colors and dyes like Blue 2, Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6 and stuff like that. Dogs don't care what color their food is. Dog food manufactures put that stuff in there so we see the different colors and think the food is better or more appealing. It's not. That junk is known to cause tumors and other health problems.

There are also some nasty preservatives you don't want your dog to be eating.

BHA and BHT have been banned by a lot of countries because it's a known human cancer causing agent. It's still legal in the US though. Don't risk it. Humans would only eat BHA/BHT once in awhile, but if it's in your pet's food they'd have to eat it everyday. Bad bad bad.

Ethoxyquin is a stabilizer for rubber! It's been banned for human consumption! It's been known to cause all kinds of health problems! The problem with it is that it's often in the meat products before they arrive at the kibble making facility. Since the kibble manufacturers don't add it to their formulas it doesn't have to be listed on the ingredient panel. It's most often found in fish. If your kibble has fish in it, contact the company. If they beat around the bush and say their suppliers' stabilizers/preservatives are proprietary information...they use ethoxyquin.

Propyl Gallate (aka Gallic Acid or Propyl Ester) is suspected to cause liver disease and cancer. You know, there are other options to preserve foods. Vitamin E, Vitamin C, and Rosemary do just as good of a job as those chemicals! They just happen to be more expensive but they are much safer than that other stuff.

There's one more thing you should avoid. It's located near the end of the ingredient list on a bag of food. It goes by the names Menadione Dimethyl-Pyrimidinol Bisulfate, Menadione Dimethyl-Pyrimidinol Bisulfite, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex, Menadione Sodium Bisulfite, Menadione Sodium Bisulfite Complex, and Vitamin K3. It's synthetic vitamin K. This is another ugly thing that you should really avoid. It's been linked to a whole bunch of health problems. There are other whole food and natural ways to get vitamin K in kibble. Manufactures use K3 because it's cheap.

## **WHY YOU SHOULD SWITCH**

Internal health benefits aside, have you noticed any of the following problems with your dog: lack of energy, itchy runny eyes, eye boogers, itchy skin, ears that smell bad, overall

doggy odor, dull coat, excessive shedding, large smelly and/or loose stools, or frequently impacted anal glands? None of those problems are normal for a healthy dog and most can be helped by switching to a better quality food.

A lot of dogs have food allergies or sensitivities that can cause all those above symptoms. The best way to make sure you're not feeding things to your dog that their body can't handle is to have an allergy test and elimination diet done by your Vet. If you're not too keen on running out and getting your dog tested there are a few things you can do right now to help.

First, you should find a food that doesn't have any of the poor quality ingredients I wrote about above. Sometimes that stuff just isn't giving your dog enough nutrition to be their healthiest. Next you should check to see if there is soy, wheat, or corn in your food. Those are highly allergenic ingredients. A lot of dogs just can't tolerate those at all. If there is none of that stuff in your food, check out the main ingredients. If you've been feeding the same brand of food or the same kind of protein for awhile your dog could have developed allergies to that kind of meat or carbohydrate.

So if the food you've been feeding has an ingredient list that reads like; Chicken, Chicken Meal, White Rice, Brown Rice, Barley etc you want to try a different food that looks nothing like the one you are currently eating. The new food could have an ingredient list like Salmon, Salmon Meal, Oatmeal, Sweet Potato etc. There's no guarantee that it's going to cure your dog but I bet it will help out some.

### **SO WHAT IN THE HECK ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO FEED?**

Well, there are lots of good foods out there. Since every dog is different it's hard for me to say one food is better than another. What one dog does terribly on another dog could do wonderfully on. If you're looking for a truly awesome and healthy food you're not going to find it at your local grocery store or Wal-Mart. More than likely you're going to have to go to a pet specialty store or order online.

### **THE PRICE OF PREMIUM**

Premium foods are more expensive. From what I've seen, the really good foods average out at about \$1.75 a pound whereas the food at the grocery store is about \$.75 a pound. Huge difference isn't it? Not really. The premium foods often have way more calories. So that 20lb bag of premium food that costs \$35 is going to outlast the 20lb bag of food that costs \$15. You probably think I'm full of it don't you?

Okay, first thing you need to do is figure out how many calories your dog needs a day. There are lots of formulas out there, but this should give you a rough estimate.

Desired weight/2.2 \* 30 + 70 = calories per day

For a 55 pound dog:

$$55 \text{ (desired weight)} / 2.2 = 25$$

$$25 * 30 = 750$$

$$750 + 70 = 820$$

A 55lb dog needs about 820 calories per day.

Okay, now let's break down the price of foods. I picked one of the most expensive foods and one of the cheapest foods just to show how there isn't that big of a difference in price once you break it down. The prices are regular prices at [www.petfooddirect.com](http://www.petfooddirect.com)

Orijen Adult 29.7 lb bag costs \$53.99

Beneful Original Adult 35.2 lb bag costs \$34.89

Find the amount of calories per pound of the food.

Orijen has 1909 calories per pound.

Beneful has 1674 calories per pound.

Okay, now break it down into price per calorie.

Orijen Adult:  $1909 \text{ (calories per pound)} * 29.7 \text{ (weight of bag in pounds)} = 56697.3$   
(calories per bag)

$53.99 \text{ (price per bag)} / 56697.3 \text{ (calories per bag)} = 0.00095225$ .  
Orijen costs \$0.0008817 per calorie

Beneful Original:  $1674 * 35.2 = 58924.8$

$34.89 / 58924.8 = 0.000592111$

Beneful costs \$0.000592111 per calorie.

Haven't lost you yet, have I? If you're having trouble figuring the price per calorie try using a scientific calculator.

Okay, now take how many calories per day your dog needs.

A 55lb dog needs 820.

Orijen:  $820 \text{ (daily calorie needs)} * 0.00095225 \text{ (cost per calorie)} = \$0.780845 \text{ (cost per day)}$

$\$0.780845 * 365 \text{ (one year)} = \$285.00$

Beneful:  $820 * 0.000592111 = \$0.48553102$

$0.48553102 * 365 = \$177.21$



Orijen – Beneful

285.00 – 177.21 = a difference of \$107.79 per year, or \$8.98 per month.

Orijen is one of the best and most expensive kibbles on the market. Beneful is terrible. Really, honest and truthful, it's terrible. I know the commercials make it look so good but...no, it's not. We all understand not everyone has an extra \$9 a month. Some people don't even have an extra \$9 a year. The good news is there are plenty of economical choices for dog foods. Many have costs similar to cheap grocery store brands but infinitely better ingredients. You just gotta know how to pick them.

## **INGREDIENTS COMPARISON**

So let's see how well you've been listening (or reading). Here we're going to compare two kibbles. The first is Beneful Original. Their website boasts that the formula "reads like a Who's Who of ingredients." We shall see. The second is Canidae All Life Stages. It's a good food at a reasonable price. Now let's compare the ingredients of these two foods.

Beneful - Ground yellow corn, chicken by-product meal, corn gluten meal, whole wheat flour, animal fat, rice flour, beef, soy flour, sugar, sorbitol, tricalcium phosphate, water, salt, phosphoric acid, animal digest, potassium chloride, dicalcium phosphate, sorbic acid (a preservative), L-Lysine monohydrochloride, dried peas, dried carrots, calcium carbonate, calcium propionate (a preservative), choline chloride, added color (Yellow 5, Red 40, Yellow 6, Blue 2), DL-Methionine, Vitamins/Minerals, garlic oil, menadione sodium bisulfite complex (source of Vitamin K activity), calcium iodate, sodium selenite.

Canidae ALS- Chicken meal, turkey meal, lamb meal, brown rice, white rice, rice bran, peas, potatoes, oatmeal, cracked pearled barley, chicken fat, millet, tomato pomace, natural flavor, flaxseed meal, ocean fish meal, choline chloride, sun cured alfalfa meal, inulin, lecithin, sage extract, cranberries, beta carotene, rosemary extract, sunflower oil, yucca schidigera extract, Pro-Biotics, Vitamins/Minerals, papaya, pineapple.

I don't need to explain this to you. Nearly every one of the bad ingredients I told you about before is in Beneful. There are two kinds of sugar in the first 10 ingredients. There are unspecified animal sources. There are dyes and nasty chemicals. What gives?

Do you see any of that junk in Canidae?

What a jip! Where are the meats and all the fresh foods that are supposed to be in Beneful? On the Beneful commercials it shows meat, rice, corn, and vegetables right? Well, where in the heck is that stuff? All I see are corn and chemicals!

## **CORN AND LOW QUALITY FOODS**

A good indicator that you have a low quality food is the presence of corn. If you are feeding a food you got at a grocery store, chances are you're feeding your dog mostly

corn. Check the ingredients of the food you have or plan on feeding to your dog. Is there corn in there? Is it the first ingredient? Why would a dog need corn and meat-less by-products in their food instead of meat? If you ran out of dog food what would you feed your dog? An ear of corn? I hope not. If you have any sense, you'd most likely feed your dog a piece of meat. Then why have we all been buying big bags of corn for our dogs to eat? Dogs can't utilize corn protein. That's not opinion, it's science.

Why do the big companies like Mars (Nutro, Pedigree, Royal Canin). Procter and Gamble (Iams, Eukanuba), Colgate-Palmolive (Science Diet, Nature's Best) and Nestle (Purina, Alpo) think that dogs are fine without meat? What are candy, soap, and toilet paper making companies doing producing dog food anyway?

A few of you who are reading this are saying to yourself, "I had a dog live 18 years eating food like that and he was just fine." Most of you that have a story like that have probably already stopped reading this. That's okay. This is for the few of you that are still with me. A man named Buster Martin has been a beer drinker and smoker nearly his entire life. He's 101 years old and he just competed in the London Marathon. Google him and read his story. If you had a dog live for 18 years eating mostly corn that dog is a genetic marvel just like Buster Martin. Most of us aren't as lucky as Mr. Martin, and most of our dogs won't be that lucky either. Dogs have very short life spans and providing them with the nutrition they need is an important way to keep them healthy for as long as possible.

## **THE CHANGE OVER**

So you're ready to switch off cruddy food? Awesome! Often times a dog that has been fed the same cruddy food for years and years is sensitive to changes in the diet. When you switch to a new food you should do it slowly. Two weeks should be plenty of time. Start with 25% new food and 75% old. Feed that for a while then go to 50/50. Once the stomach can handle the 50/50, try 75% new 25% old. Use that ratio for a bit then go 100% new. This should help keep the stomach happy. If you experience any problems keep some canned 100% pumpkin on hand and go back to the ratio where you had firm stools. Not pumpkin pie filling with spices and sugar, just plain pumpkin. A spoonful, give or take, will help keep stools firm. In the most sensitive of dogs sometimes you have to transition a kibble at a time. It can be a real hassle but it's so very worth it. Give the new food at least a six week trial after transitioning. Some dogs go through "detox" when they switch to a better food so it's imperative to give the dog some time before passing judgment on a kibble.

## **MY DOG WILL NOT EAT THIS FOOD I SPENT A FORTUNE ON**

It happens. Give a child McDonalds every day then hand them a plate of chicken breast and brussel sprouts and they probably won't eat it either. There's a handy trick that usually solves this problem. It's called the 15 minute rule. If you're a free feeder (leaving food out all day) stop doing that. In most cases it's not a good idea anyway. You want your dog to know the food is coming from you not a magical bowl that

constantly has food in it all day. Anyway, set the food down at the scheduled meal time. Allow the dog 15 minutes to begin eating. If he/she doesn't start eating within those 15 minutes take the food away. Don't dress it up. Don't give the dog treats. No table scraps. No nothing. Then at the next scheduled meal time offer the same food again. It's a tough love approach and it almost always works. If it doesn't (I'm 99% sure it will) you can mix in a bit of canned dog food, canned fish, low sodium broth, peanut butter, cottage cheese, yogurt, pumpkin, mashed bananas, mashed potatoes, parmesan cheese, or just about anything you can think of with kibble. That should entice your pooch to gobble down the new stuff. Once he/she is eating regularly you can cut back on the extras gradually until you faze them out completely.

### **THE ROTATION DIET**

Many people choose not to feed the same food day in day out for the life of the pet. There are a few reasons why but mainly it's to help keep a dog interested at meal time and because many people feel what one kibble is deficient in the other can make up for it, and vice versa. It's a good idea to find a few different kibbles a dog can tolerate and thrive on. You never know when an allergy might pop up so it's good to have differing formulas at your disposal. Some people who incorporate a rotation diet change the food at each meal time. Some do every week. Some do every other week. Some change once a month. Some change whenever a bag runs out. If you're interested in rotating kibble please know there is no set way to do it. It's up to you and your dog. Sure can be fun though!

### **A QUICK WORD ABOUT CANNED FOOD**

Canned foods are less processed than kibble and are typically higher in protein and lower in carbohydrates also. They also provide your pet with much needed moisture. How do you know you're getting a good kind of canned food though? You can use the same method as choosing a kibble. If the ingredient label on the canned food lists stuff like by-products, chemicals, lots of carbohydrate fragments, corn, soy, and other junk don't get it. Simple as that. You should be able to recognize most of the ingredients in the food as food.

An example of a good food is: Chicken, Chicken Liver, Chicken Broth, Brown Rice, Eggs, Peas, Carrots, Flaxseed, Spinach, Menhaden Fish Oil, Vitamins, Dried Kelp, Salt, Taurine, Potassium Chloride, Minerals, Artichokes, Cranberries, Pumpkin, Tomato, Blueberries, Broccoli, Cabbage, Kale, Parsley.

And an example of a bad food is: Chicken, sufficient water for processing, poultry by-products, brewers rice, carob bean gum, sodium tripolyphosphate, carrageenan, minerals, vegetable oil, dried yam, guar gum, natural flavor blend, bay leaves, vitamins.

### **PUPPY, ADULT, AND SENIOR FOOD**

There are four main types of dog foods on the market; Puppy, Adult Maintenance, Senior, and All Life Stages. The first three are pretty self explanatory. Puppy food is designed for growing puppies, adult maintenance is designed to maintain the health of an adult, senior formulas are designed for older, less active dogs and they are typically lower calorie versions of the adult. Senior formulas are also notorious for being full of fillers, so make sure to read those ingredient labels. Senior dogs should get even more protein than the average adult so make sure that protein percentage is up there (like at least 30% or so). All Life Stages (ALS) foods are designed to be used by every dog no matter the age.

### **LARGE BREED PUPPIES NEED DIFFERENT FOODS**

Every dog is an individual, and therefore has unique needs. Large and giant breed puppies for example, should eat foods with a moderate protein percentage, as well as a calcium level of 1.5% or less. Also, it's important to keep them lean to avoid extra pressure on the joints. These criteria ensure a proper growth rate, and help prevent joint issues in adulthood. Puppy foods, for the most part, should be avoided because they often promote a faster growth rate than is recommended.

### **TREATS AND CHEWS**

Treats and chews shouldn't make up more than 10% of a dog's diet. Any more than that and you run the risk of throwing off your dog's vitamin and mineral ratios causing nutritional deficiencies. There are some really great and really terrible treats out there. Now that you've learned how to pick a good dog food, you should be able to find good nutritious snacks without ugly chemicals and by-products.

Here's an example of a treat you would want to avoid.

Beggin' Strips Original Bacon Flavor: Ground wheat, corn gluten meal, wheat flour, ground yellow corn, water, sugar, glycerin, soybean meal, hydrogenated starch hydrolysate, bacon (preserved with sodium nitrite), salt, bacon fat (preserved with BHA), meat, phosphoric acid, sorbic acid (a preservative), calcium propionate (a preservative), natural and artificial smoke flavors, added color (Red 40, Yellow 5, Blue 1, Yellow 6).

See. It's got that ugly stuff we talked about before.

Here's an example of a good treat.

Wellness Pure Rewards Beef: Beef, Dried Chicory Root, Cultured Whey, Sea Salt, Lecithin, Garlic, Mixed Tocopherols (a natural preservative).

Biscuit or cookie type treats are very popular too. Compare these two biscuit treats and see which one is better.

Hills Science Diet Adult Canine Maintenance Treats with Real Chicken: Corn meal, brewers rice, chicken by-product meal, powdered cellulose, chicken, natural flavor, animal fat (preserved with BHA, propyl gallate and citric acid), dried egg product, minerals (potassium chloride, calcium carbonate, iodized salt, ferrous sulfate, zinc oxide,

copper sulfate, manganous oxide, calcium iodate, sodium selenite), preserved with BHT and BHA, vitamins (choline chloride, vitamin A supplement, vitamin D3 supplement, vitamin E supplement, niacin, thiamine, calcium pantothenate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid, biotin, vitamin B12 supplement).

Old Mother Hubbard Old Fashioned Dog Biscuit: Wheat flour, oatmeal, chicken fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols), molasses, charcoal, chicken, white cheddar cheese, eggs, turmeric, paprika, whole ground apples, whole ground carrots, garlic, sea salt.

In a good treat you should be able to recognize the ingredients as food.

You can also find good chews and bad chews. A bad chew's ingredient list looks like this.

Busy Bone ChewBone Treat: Rice, glycerin, wheat flour, water, tricalcium phosphate, poultry by-product meal, gelatin, hydrogenated starch hydrolysate, brewers dried yeast, sugar, dried beef stock, animal fat preserved with mixed-tocopherols (form of Vitamin E), wheat gluten, partially hydrogenated cottonseed oil, phosphoric acid, animal digest, salt, added color (Red 40, Yellow 5, Blue 1, Yellow 6 and other color), sorbic acid (a preservative), natural and artificial flavors, BHA (a preservative), BHT (a preservative).

Here's another popular chew whose ingredients are severely lacking.

Greenies: Gelatin, Wheat Protein Isolate, Glycerin, Soy Protein Isolate, Sodium Caseinate, Natural Poultry flavour, Hydrogenated Starch Hydrolysate, Vegetable Oil (Preserved with Propyl Gallate), Sodium Tripolyphosphate, Lecithin, Ground Flaxseed, Minerals (Calcium Carbonate, Magnesium Oxide, Zinc Sulfate, Ferrous Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Manganese Sulfate, Potassium Iodide), Magnesium Monostearate, Vitamins (dl-Alpha Tocopherol Acetate [source of vitamin E], Vitamin B12 Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Niacin Supplement, Vitamin A Supplement, Riboflavin Supplement, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Biotin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride [Vitamin B6], Thiamine Mononitrate [Vitamin B1], Folic Acid), Monoglycerides of Edible Fatty Acids, Choline Chloride, Potassium Sorbate (to preserve freshness), Chlorophyll.

The best chews are made from animals. Ears, hooves, bullysticks, lungs, gullets, antlers, trachea, tendons, and other products like this make wonderful chews. They are fully digestible and will help keep your pet's teeth clean just as well as the other two.

## **FOODS TO AVOID**

Here's a short list of foods to steer clear of. There are other yucky foods out there but these are common ones. Take a look at the ingredients in these foods and try to apply what you've learned to see why they aren't considered that great.

Alpo - <http://www.alpo.com>

Beneful - <http://www.beneful.com>

Dad's - <http://www.dadspetcare.com>

Purina Dog Chow - <http://www.longliveyourdog.com>

Iams - <http://www.iams.com>  
 Nutro - <http://www.nutroproducts.com>  
 Pedigree - <http://www.pedigree.com>  
 Purina One - <http://www.purinaone.com>  
 Pro Plan - <http://www.proplan.com>  
 Science Diet - <http://www.hillspet.com>  
 Royal Canin - <http://www.royalcanin.com>  
 Eukanuba - [www.eukanuba.com](http://www.eukanuba.com)

### **FOODS TO LOOK FOR**

These are all good dog foods. Check them out and see which ones look the best to you. There are other great foods out there but these are all pretty popular.

Blue Buffalo - <http://www.bluebuff.com>  
 By Nature - <http://www.bynaturepetfoods.com>  
 Canidae - <http://www.canidae.com>  
 Natural Balance - <http://www.naturalbalanceinc.com>  
 Eagle Pack Holistic Select - <http://www.eaglepack.com>  
 Fromm - <http://www.frommfamily.com>  
 Timberwolf - <http://www.timberwolforganics.com>  
 Natura Products - <http://www.naturapet.com>  
 Wellness - <http://www.wellnesspetfood.com>  
 Nature's Logic - <http://www.natureslogic.com>  
 Nature's Variety - <http://naturesvariety.com>  
 Orijen - <http://www.orijen.ca>  
 Solid Gold - <http://www.solidgoldhealth.com>  
 Taste of the Wild - <http://www.tasteofthewildpetfood.com>  
 Ziwi Peak - <http://www.ziwipeak.com>

If you made it this far you're well on your way to being a dog food guru! Here are some places to find more information.

<http://www.dogfoodproject.com>  
<http://www.dogfoodanalysis.com/>  
[http://www.dogster.com/forums/Food\\_and\\_Nutrition](http://www.dogster.com/forums/Food_and_Nutrition)

This "guide" was the love child of many members of the Dogster community. Come visit us in the Food and Nutrition forum. We're always happy to answer your questions and make friends. None of us work for pet food companies or anything like that. We're all very dedicated pet owners who are trying to do the best we can do for our pets and to help others along the way.

Love,  
 The Foodies =)

This is a list of calories per pound in dog foods. Some are not exact because the manufactures would only provide the caloric information per cup and did not include the weight. Therefore I picked the weight of the cup to figure a rough estimate of calories per pound. All estimates (shown as “Brand” (estimated)) are based on 1 cup = 115 grams. All other numbers are according to the manufacture (except where noted).

**Acana**

Adult Dog - 1841  
 Lamb and Apple - 1795  
 Sport and Agility - 2114  
 Grasslands - 1909  
 Prairie Harvest - 1909  
 Pacifica - 1841

**Artemis:**

Fresh Mix – 1634  
 Maximal Dog – 1818  
 Weight Management - 1497  
 Small Breed Puppy – 1690  
 Small Breed Adult – 1674  
 Small Breed Senior - 1561  
 Med/Lg Puppy – 1679  
 Med/Lg Senior - 1546

**Avoderm:**

Chicken and Brown Rice – 1568  
 Lamb and Brown Rice - 1706

**Beneful:**

Original -1674  
 Healthy Radiance – 1726  
 Healthy Harvest – 1646  
 Healthy Growth – 1751  
 Healthy Radiance – 1744  
 Playful Life - 1674

**Blue Buffalo:**

Chicken and Brown Rice – 1673  
 Lamb and Brown Rice – 1544  
 Fish and Sweet Potato – 1620  
 Wilderness - 1702

**By Nature:**

Puppy – 1860  
 Adult – 1642  
 Active – 1760

Pork Sweet Potato – 1665  
 Salmon and Yogurt – 1600  
 Duck Sweet Pea – 1600  
 BrightLife – 1648 (estimated weight 4oz per cup)  
 Organic Chicken – 1600

**California Natural:**

Lamb and Rice – 1814  
 Chicken and Rice – 1860  
 Low Fat Lamb – 1586  
 Low Fat Chicken - 1555  
 Herring and Sweet Potato – 1579  
 Lamb Puppy – 1930  
 Chicken Puppy – 1722

**Canidae:**

All Life Stages – 1875  
 Chicken and Rice – 1899  
 Lamb and Rice – 1828  
 Platinum – 1600  
 ALS Grain Free - 1773  
 Beef and Fish - 1828  
 Salmon Grain Free - 1773

**Chicken Soup:**

Puppy – 1690  
 Adult – 1633  
 Adult Light – 1404  
 Senior – 1529  
 LB Puppy – 1639  
 LB Adult – 1621

**Diamond:**

Hi-Energy – 1736  
 Original – 1540  
 Maintenance – 1604  
 Performance - 1779  
 Premium – 1766  
 Naturals Lamb – 1636  
 Naturals Extreme – 2141  
 Naturals Chicken – 1685  
 Naturals Beef - 1643

**Eagle Pack:**

Natural Formula – 1604  
 Sm and Med Breed Pup – 1756



Lg and Giant Pup – 1609  
 Power Formula – 1796  
 Original Adult – 1680  
 Lg and Giant Adult – 1673  
 Maturity – 1507  
 Reduced Fat – 1522  
 HS Chicken and Rice – 1669  
 HS Duck and Oatmeal – 1659  
 HS Lamb and Rice – 1653  
 HS Anchovy – 1666  
 HS Lg and Giant Pup – 1600  
 HS Lg and Giant Adult – 1673  
 HS Senior – 1636  
 HS Small and Mini Pup – 1830  
 HS Small and Mini Adult – 1884

**Evo:**

Regular (large and small bites) – 1929  
 Red Meat (large and small bites) – 1834  
 Reduced Fat - 1643

**Fromm:**

Surf and Turf – 2000  
 Duck and Sweet Potato – 1800  
 Chicken A' La Veg – 1800  
 Whitefish and Potato – 1675  
 Salmon A' La Veg – 1850

**Healthwise:**

Chicken and Oatmeal – 1705  
 Lamb and Oatmeal – 1668  
 Weight Control – 1545  
 Chicken Puppy - 1809

**Horizon Legacy:**

Adult - 1723  
 Puppy - 1791

**Iams:**

Puppy - 1745  
 Large Breed Puppy - 1700  
 Small Breed Puppy - 1763  
 Adult Chunks (and Mini) - 1685  
 Large Breed Adult - 1631  
 Lamb Meal and Rice - 1614  
 Weight Control - 1584

Active Maturity - 1768

**Innova:**

Adult - 1895

Large Breed Senior - 1586

Puppy - 1818

**Kibbles N' Bits (estimated):**

Mini Bits – 1415

Original – 1296

Beefy Bits – 1292

Homestyle Chicken – 1292

Homestyle Beef – 1296

Wholesome Medley – 1178

Balanced Bites – 1285

Brushing Bites – 1427

Golden Years – 1439

**Merrick:**

Cowboy Cookout – 1633

Grammy's Pot Pie – 1707

Turkducken – 1660

Wilderness Blend – 1660

Campfire Trout Feast – 1679

Senior Medley – 1531

Puppy Plate - 1579

Before Grain Buffalo – 1625

Before Grain Chicken – 1633

Before Grain Salmon – 1625

Before Grain Tuna – 1706

**Natural Balance:**

Ultra Premium – 1632

Ultra Premium Small Bites - 1660

Reduced Calorie – 1440

Potato and Duck - 1492

Potato & Duck Small Bites - 1610

Sweet Potato and Fish – 1484

Sweet Potato and Venison – 1548

Vegetarian – 1502

Organic - 1577

**Nature's Best:**

Chicken and Brown Rice (reg and small) – 1674

Lamb and Brown Rice (reg and small) - 1692

**Nature's Logic (estimated):**

Chicken – 2178

Lamb – 2178

Venison – 2178

Duck and Salmon – 2178

**Nature's Recipe (estimated):**

Toy Breed – 1332

Terrier Breed – 1423

Large Breed Puppy – 1383

Large Breed Adult – 1312

Venison and Rice – 1186

Vegetarian – 1194

Chicken Rice Barley – 1233

Lamb Rice Barley – 1206

Fish and Potato – 1225

Puppy Lamb – 1312

Adult Lamb – 1253

Senior Lamb – 1206

Turkey Fruit/Veg – 1356

**Nature's Variety:**

Chicken Instinct – 2576

Rabbit Instinct – 2376

Duck Instinct – 2289

Chicken Prairie – 1880

Beef Prairie – 1880

Lamb Prairie – 1967

Salmon Prairie – 2011

Venison Prairie – 2087

**Nutro:**

Max Adult - 1675

Ultra Adult - 1583

Natural Choice Lamb and Rice - 1584

Natural Choice Chicken and Rice - 1584

**Orijen:**

Adult – 1909

6 Fish – 1909

Puppy – 2045

Large Breed Puppy – 1909

Senior – 1636

**Pedigree:**

Healthy Vitality Adult – 1591

Chicken and Rice – 1545  
 Lamb Meal and Rice – 1568  
 Healthy Start – 1591  
 Weight Control – 1495  
 Healthy Maturity – 1582

**Pet Promise:**

Daily Health – 886  
 Healthy Growth – 894  
 Healthy Weight – 790

**\*\*These seem extremely low, but this is the information provided to me by the company\*\***

**Pinnacle:**

Chicken and Oats – 1656  
 Trout and Sweet Potato – 1553  
 Duck and Potato – 1532  
 Peak Protein – 1864

**Purina Dog Chow:**

Dog Chow – 1680  
 Healthy Morsels – 1665  
 Fit and Trim – 1229  
 Indoor Complete - 1607

**Purina One:**

Large Breed Adult – 1708  
 Large Breed Healthy Weight - 1627

**Purina Pro Plan:**

Beef and Rice – 1887  
 Chicken and Rice – 1987  
 Lamb and Rice - 1828  
 Selects Large Breed Lamb – 1916  
 Selects Chicken – 1872  
 Selects Lamb – 2088  
 Selects Salmon - 1834  
 Selects Turkey - 1890

**Royal Canin:**

Mini Adult 27 - 1803  
 Medium Adult 25 - 1766  
 Maxi Large Breed - 1801

**Science Diet:**

Adult Original (reg and small) – 1684

Lamb and Rice (reg and small) – 1680  
Light Adult (reg and small) – 1362  
Light Large Breed – 1376  
Adult Large Breed – 1683  
Oral Care – 1475  
Active Adult – 2099  
High Energy - 2099

**Soild Gold:**

Hund-n-Flocken – 1782  
Wolfking - 1525  
Mmillennia - 1873  
Wee Bit - 1670  
Barking at the Moon - 1940  
Holistique Blendz - 1635  
Hundchen Flocken Puppy - 1578  
Wolfcub Puppy - 1601

**Taste of the Wild:**

High Prairie – 1691  
Pacific Stream – 1636  
Wetlands - 1705

**Timberwolf:**

Wild and Natural – 1809  
Ocean Blue – 1670  
Lamb, Barely, Apple – 1781  
Dakota Bison – 1673  
Wilderness Elk – 1673  
Southwest Chicken – 1790  
Black Forest – 1605

**Wellness:**

Chicken Formula – 1623  
Lamb Formula – 1591  
Whitefish Formula – 1595  
Healthy Weight – 1445  
Just for Puppy – 1727  
Just for Seniors – 1464  
Core – 1636  
Core Ocean – 1636  
Core Reduced Fat – 1486