

General Guidelines for Selection

Dietary changes should always be considered with your dog's overall health in mind. Please consult your veterinarian for guidance.

Not all foods are created equal. The following general rules apply:

- Whole foods (e.g., sardines, an apple) are more nutritious than food fractions (e.g., fish oil, apple pectin).
- Fresh food, either raw or lightly cooked, is more nutritious than processed food (i.e., any food carrying a label and wrapped in packaging material is considered processed).

Feed your dog the best food you can afford, and food that matches your lifestyle. For example, if you have very young children, a raw diet may pose a contamination risk. Strive to include as much fresh, whole food in the diet as possible. Expect that supplements will be needed to fill in nutritional blanks. Agricultural practices have rendered many foods, even organic ones, less nutritionally complete than they once were.

Dogs appreciate and need dietary diversity as much as we do. Follow the **Rule of Fives**:

- Select five products your dog likes.
- Refrain from buying products in the "Not so good" category below.
- Buy kibble in 5-pound bags. Store in original package, preferably in refrigerator.
- Feed a different product each day in a 5-day rotation.

To increase dietary diversity and interest, mix in a small amount of the food you eat that day (meat, fish, veggies and fruits; 1 tsp to 1/2 cup, depending on your dog's size). Remember that these additions are part of your dog's diet, not in addition to it, to avoid unhealthy weight gain. Ask your vet what the appropriate weight for your dog should be, and maintain that weight. It is a myth that dogs should not eat "people food". There is no scientific support for this, except that there are certain foods (onions, grapes, chocolate, macadamia nuts) that dogs cannot eat without ill effects. But a good quality bag or can of chicken and rice dog food, for example, is made from the same chicken and rice you would eat.

General Guidelines for Feeding

Avoid feeding chilled food. Food should always be fed at body temperature (about 101° F for a dog). Add boiling water to food and soak till warm to touch. Do not use the microwave as nutrients will be lost.

For manufactured canned and kibbled diets, it is essential to put back in what processing has removed. This includes, as a minimum:

- Water (1 part kibble to 1 part water. Note you must add water to the grain-free diets because they are highly concentrated.)
- Omega 3 essential fatty acids
- Enzymes
- Multi-vitamin/mineral supplement

Dog Food Options

Home prepared ancestral diet: prepared from ingredients you might eat yourself – fresh chicken, beef, turkey, greens, and fruits, preferably organic. Feed either raw or lightly cooked and add appropriate supplements for balance and completeness. Diet changes daily. To insure balance in

your diet, consult appropriate references. Raw diets may not be appropriate for all dogs. Consult with your veterinarian if you are unsure about the suitability of a raw diet for your dog. Be very careful about freshness and quality – raw diets are not for everyone.

Commercially prepared ancestral diet: Frozen raw diets from human food-grade ingredients. The manufacturer sources and blends all needed ingredients for a complete and balanced diet. Change variety often; preferably on a daily basis (see **Rule of Fives** above). Examples:

- Bravo! Balance Formula
- Fresh is Best (frozen raw product)
- Honest Kitchen (dehydrated product)
- Nature's Variety Instinct RAW
- Stella & Chewie's

Canned or kibbled manufactured foods from human food-grade ingredients. Some of these are organic. Examples:

- Back to Basics
- Blue Buffalo
- Fromms Four-Star Nutritionals
- Karma (Natura Pet Products)
- Natural Balance Organic Formula

Select single protein source foods with crude protein not more than 36%.

Canned or kibbled processed foods, not from human food grade ingredients, but free of by-products (e.g., chicken by-product meal), unidentified protein or fat sources (e.g., meat meal, animal digest, animal fat), food fragments (e.g., tomato pomace, beet pulp), artificial colors (Yellow 5, Red 40, Blue 2), flavors (natural smoke flavor), preservatives (sorbic acid, BHA, BHT), and sweeteners (dextrose, sucrose, brown sugar).

Examples (this list is not inclusive; there are many more):

- Earthborn
- EVO Dog Food
- Merricks Grain Free
- Fromms Gold Nutritionals
- Nature's Variety Prairie recipes
- Wysong

Pet food recalls due to various forms of contamination are becoming increasingly common. To protect your pet's health, know who makes your dog's food and treats, and where the raw materials come from. We prefer products made and sourced in the USA, however, this is no guarantee of wholesomeness.

We can do better!: Canned or kibbled processed foods containing **any** of the following:

- Meat or poultry by-products
- Corn: meal, gluten or other forms
- Soy: controversial ingredient; may cause allergic response
- Fats or proteins whose sources are not identified by species
- Food fractions and fragments.
- Colors, preservatives, sweeteners, softeners, flavors, salt

Examples:

- There are many, often found in establishments that do not cater to the needs of pets (grocery stores, box stores, hardware stores). To protect your pet, learn to read and interpret labels.

For more information, see *Feed Your Pet Right* (Nestle & Nesheim, 2010), *Unlocking the Canine Ancestral Diet* (Brown, 2009), and *wholedogjournal.com*.

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