



FEED SMART

**THE ULTIMATE 7-STEP GUIDE
TO HEALTHY DOG NUTRITION**



PAW NOURISH



WELCOME DOG LOVERS!

This guide will help you make smarter, healthier choices that truly benefit your dog's wellbeing.

OVERVIEW

- THE DARK SIDE OF DOG FOOD
- HOW TO READ LABELS LIKE A PRO
- COMMON FOOD MYTHS – BUSTED
- WHAT NUTRIENTS YOUR DOG REALLY NEEDS
- FOOD TYPES EXPLAINED
- EXAMPLE MEAL PLANS
- PAW NOURISH RECOMMENDS

ENJOY!



THE DARK SIDE OF DOG FOOD

The commercial dog food industry has increasingly come under scientific scrutiny as researchers uncover hidden dangers and potential health risks for our pets. Here are some of the most critical findings.

Low-Quality Meat Sources and Fillers

Many low-cost dog foods contain meat by-products or meat meals made from slaughterhouse waste, which are often not fit for human consumption. These may be contaminated with harmful substances such as antibiotics, hormones, or pesticides. On top of that, they're usually loaded with fillers like corn, wheat, or soy, which are difficult for dogs to digest and provide little nutritional value.

Risk of Bacterial Contamination

Some low-budget dog foods, especially raw meat products, have been found to contain harmful bacteria such as Salmonella and antibiotic-resistant strains. These pathogens not only endanger your dog but can also pose a threat to humans—particularly children, seniors, and individuals with weakened immune systems.



Health Problems from Unbalanced Nutrition

Using low-grade ingredients and artificial additives can lead to a range of health issues: **Obesity:** Cheap foods often contain excessive carbohydrates and fats, which can lead to unhealthy weight gain and increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Allergies & Skin Issues: Artificial colorants, preservatives, and low-quality proteins are common triggers for allergic reactions and skin irritations.

Digestive Issues: Poor-quality ingredients often cause gastrointestinal problems such as bloating, vomiting, and diarrhea.

HOW TO READ DOG FOOD LABELS LIKE A PRO

By mastering the art of reading dog food labels, you empower yourself to make informed decisions that contribute to your dog's health and well-being. Always prioritize transparency, quality ingredients, and appropriate nutritional content tailored to your dog's specific needs.

Product Name & Ingredient Percentage

The product name can indicate the amount of a specific ingredient present.

For example:

"Beef Dog Food": Must contain at least 95% beef (excluding water content).

"Beef Dinner" or **"Beef Formula"**: Should have at least 25% beef.

"With Beef": Requires only 3% beef.

"Beef Flavor": No specific percentage required; flavor must be detectable.

Understanding these terms helps in assessing the actual meat content in the product.

Ingredient List Order

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. The first few items constitute the majority of the food. Look for high-quality protein sources like "chicken," "beef," or "salmon" at the top. Be cautious of vague terms like "meat by-products" or "animal digest," which can indicate lower-quality ingredients.



Guaranteed Analysis

This section provides the minimum or maximum percentages of key nutrients:

- **Crude Protein:** Minimum percentage.
- **Crude Fat:** Minimum percentage.
- **Crude Fiber:** Maximum percentage.
- **Moisture:** Maximum percentage.

Note that these values are listed on an "as-fed" basis, including moisture content. For accurate comparisons, convert these to a "dry matter" basis.

COMMON FOOD MYTHS BUSTED

Navigating the world of nutrition can be challenging, especially with numerous myths circulating. Let's debunk some of the most common food myths to help you make informed dietary choices.

1. Myth: All Fats Are Bad

Fact: Not all fats are harmful. While trans fats should be avoided, unsaturated fats found in avocados, nuts, and olive oil are beneficial for heart health.

2. Myth: Fresh Produce Is Always Healthier Than Frozen

Fact: Frozen fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh ones. They're often frozen shortly after harvest, preserving their nutrient content.

3. Myth: Eating After 6 PM Causes Weight Gain

Fact: Weight gain is more about total calorie intake than meal timing. Eating late doesn't inherently cause weight gain unless it leads to overeating.

4. Myth: Carbohydrates Are Unhealthy

Fact: Carbohydrates are a primary energy source. Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables provide essential nutrients and should be included in a balanced diet.

5. Myth: Gluten-Free Diets Are Healthier for Everyone

Fact: Unless you have celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, there's no need to avoid gluten. Whole-grain products offer valuable nutrients.

6. Myth: Microwaving Food Destroys Nutrients

Fact: Microwaving is a quick cooking method that often preserves nutrients better than other methods like boiling, which can leach nutrients into water.

7. Myth: Low-Fat Products Are Always Healthier

Fact: Low-fat products can contain added sugars or artificial ingredients to compensate for flavor, potentially making them less healthy.

8. Myth: Eating Eggs Increases Cholesterol Levels

Fact: Moderate egg consumption doesn't significantly impact blood cholesterol for most people and can be part of a healthy diet.



WHAT NUTRIENTS YOUR DOG REALLY NEEDS

Ensuring your dog receives a balanced diet is crucial for their overall health and well-being. Here's a breakdown of the essential nutrients every dog needs.

1. Protein: Building Blocks for the Body

Proteins are vital for muscle development, tissue repair, and immune function. Dogs require essential amino acids such as arginine, histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine, which must be obtained through their diet. For growth and reproduction, a minimum of 22.5% protein on a dry matter basis is recommended, while adult maintenance requires at least 18.0%.

2. Fats: Energy and Healthy Skin

Fats provide energy and aid in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Essential fatty acids like linoleic acid (omega-6) and alpha-linolenic acid (omega-3) are crucial for maintaining healthy skin and coat. A minimum of 8.5% fat is recommended for growth and reproduction, and 5.5% for adult maintenance.

4. Vitamins: Supporting Metabolic Functions

- Vitamin A: Essential for vision and immune function.
- Vitamin D: Important for calcium absorption and bone health.
- Vitamin E: Acts as an antioxidant, protecting cells from damage.
- B-Complex Vitamins: Support metabolism and energy production.

Adequate levels of these vitamins are necessary to prevent deficiencies and support overall health.

5. Minerals: Structural and Functional Roles

Minerals are involved in various bodily functions:

- Calcium and Phosphorus: Crucial for bone and teeth formation.
- Iron: Necessary for oxygen transport in the blood.
- Zinc: Supports skin health and immune function.
- Iodine: Essential for thyroid function.



FOOD TYPES EXPLAINED

Navigating the dog food aisle can be overwhelming. With so many options—dry, wet, raw, freeze-dried—it's crucial to understand what each type offers. Here's a breakdown to help you make informed choices for your pup.

Dry Food (Kibble)

Pros:

- Convenient & affordable
- Long shelf life
- Helps reduce plaque through chewing

Cons:

- Can be highly processed and is not a long term solution!
- May contain fillers or lower-quality ingredients

PAW NOURISH RECOMMENDS

Open Farm – Premium Dry Food

-  Ethically sourced, human-grade ingredients
-  Grain-free and gluten-free options
-  Eco-friendly and sustainable packaging



[shop now](#)



click here for: **Open Farm**

AniSwiss – Venison & Potato Formula

-  Swiss-made hypoallergenic recipe
-  Free from artificial additives or cheap fillers
-  Great for allergy-prone pups
-  Premium ingredients for optimal well-being



[shop now](#)



click here for: **AniSwiss**

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Wet Food (Canned)

Pros:

- High moisture content (great for hydration)
- Often more palatable for picky eaters
- Less processed than kibble in some cases

Cons:

- Pricier than dry food
- Shorter shelf life once opened
- Can contribute to dental issues if not balanced with chewing
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Best For: Dogs with dental issues, dehydration risks, or low appetites.

PAW NOURISH RECOMMENDS

The Honest Kitchen – Wet Dog Food

-  100% human-grade ingredients
-  Just add water for a fresh meal
-  No fillers, by-products, or preservatives



[shop now](#)



click here for: **The Honest Kitchen**

When choosing a wet food that **truly supports your dog's health**, it's important to look beyond flashy packaging. High-quality options like **The Honest Kitchen** offer gently cooked meals made with real, human-grade ingredients—no mystery meat or fillers. With a high percentage of **actual meat and nutritious vegetables**, this kind of food can be a game-changer, especially for dogs with sensitive stomachs or allergies. If you're looking for something that meets Paw Nourish standards—clean, honest, and nourishing—this is a brand worth checking out.

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Raw Diet (BARF - Biologically Appropriate Raw Food)

Pros:

- Mimics natural ancestral diet
- Often improves coat quality, digestion, and energy

Cons:

- Requires strict hygiene
- Risk of bacterial contamination
- Needs careful nutrient balancing

Best For: Experienced owners willing to research and invest time, or those using trusted raw food brands.

EASY & HEALTHY BARF SOLUTIONS

Primal Pet Foods – Raw BARF Options

-  Ethically raised meats
-  Organic fruits and vegetables
-  Easy-to-serve frozen nuggets



[shop now](#)



click here for: **Primal Pet Foods**

Stella & Chewy's – Raw Frozen Meals

-  Flash-frozen to lock in nutrients
-  90-95% meat, organs, and bone
-  Fortified with probiotics and vitamins



[shop now](#)



click here for: **Stella & Chewy's**

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Home-Cooked Meal

Pros:

- Full control over ingredients
- Can be tailored to specific dietary needs

Cons:

- Time-consuming
- Risk of unbalanced meals without veterinary guidance

Best For: Dogs with specific health concerns or food sensitivities, under vet supervision.

Chicken & Veggie Power Bowl

(adjust portions by size & weight)

Ingredients:

- 250g boneless, skinless chicken breast (cooked & shredded)
- 1/2 cup cooked brown rice
- 1/2 cup steamed carrots (chopped small)
- 1/4 cup peas (steamed or boiled)
- 1 tsp olive oil (for healthy fats)
- Optional: 1/2 tsp ground eggshell (for calcium)

Instructions:

1. Cook chicken thoroughly, shred into small pieces.
2. Cook brown rice as per instructions.
3. Steam carrots and peas until soft.
4. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
5. Drizzle with olive oil and let cool before serving.

Paw Nourish's Comprehensive Dog Care Approach



We hope this guide has given you valuable insight into smarter feeding choices and the power of real nutrition for your dog's health.

At Paw Nourish, we believe that every dog deserves more than just food — they deserve true nourishment.

This guide is just the beginning. We're building a trusted space for dog lovers who want the best for their companions — from clean, premium ingredients to expert-backed supplements and carefully chosen product recommendations.

Stay Connected

Make sure you're signed up to our email list — we'll send you insider tips, healthy recipes, and early access to upcoming offers.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE PAW NOURISH JOURNEY!

Your Paw Nourish Team

