
Diet Recommendations

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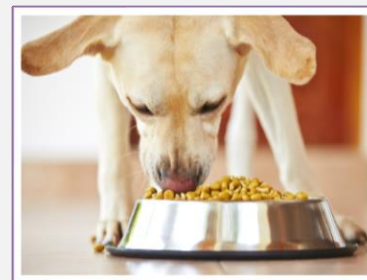
There are so many foods that it can be confusing to know which to buy. Breeders have their favorite foods. Pet stores have foods that they push even though they carry many brands. Many unsubstantiated claims are made about how bad some foods are for their pet and how wonderful others are. Most of them are wrong or at best misleading. Veterinarians have extensive training in nutrition. They are your best source of animal nutrition information. There is also a specialty for board certified veterinary nutritionists. <http://www.acvn.org>. A more objective opinion could be expected from someone that is not selling pet food.

Does higher cost mean better quality?

Cost of the food does not correlate well with nutritional adequacy of the food. While we don't make specific recommendations on what brand of food to feed, we can say that Purina, Hills, Royal Canin, and Iams have all proven to be tested with food trials, have met the AAFCO nutritional standards, and have been formulated by nutritionists. These are the foods we trust and feed our own pets.

What is the AAFCO?

The AAFCO stands for the Association of American Feed Control Officials. Their purpose is to set guidelines and policies for pet food manufacturers to follow. They set the nutritional standards for pet food companies to meet. The FDA provides labeling guidelines while the USDA regulates the ingredients being used to make pet foods. There is no governing body that tests pet foods, which is why feeding a brand of food that has been around a long while, uses feeding trials, and has qualified nutritionists on staff is so important.



What to look for in a Pet Food Company:

- *Meets the AAFCO nutritional standards
- *Tested with AAFCO Feeding trials – This is gold standard
- *Label should say complete and balanced for pet's specific life stage
- *Manufacturer should employ at least one full-time Qualified Nutritionist- Board Certified and/or PhD in Animal Nutrition
- *A nutritionist that formulates their food
- *Do they own the plant their food is manufactured in?

Common Pet Food Myths:

1. More expensive means better nutritional quality
2. Foods labeled as Premium or Gourmet are better
3. Food is better if it lists Real Meat as the number one ingredient
4. The order of the ingredients is the most important factor

Pet food companies can manipulate their ingredients in order to provide the most appealing label for consumers.

Grain Free Diets

Our Doctors feel that there is no health benefit in feeding Grain Free Foods unless your pet has a known allergy to a specific grain. Most pet's food allergies are to proteins such as chicken, beef, or lamb. If you feel your pet needs to be on a grain free diet due to an allergy, we can leave a message for the Doctor to see what they recommend. While there is a link to grain free and Exotic/boutique diets to Heart Issues, the direct cause is still unknown, some studies indicate it could also be related to the legumes such as peas, beans or lentils in those diets, so we don't recommend diets containing legumes either unless specifically required for certain health conditions.

The FDA has begun investigations due to reports of canine dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs eating certain pet foods, many labeled as "grain-free," which contained a high proportion of peas, lentils, other legume seeds (pulses), and/or potatoes in various forms (whole, flour, protein, etc.) as main ingredients (listed within the first 10 ingredients in the ingredient list, before vitamins and minerals).

Link to the FDA Investigation:

https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/news-events/fda-investigation-potential-link-between-certain-diets-and-canine-dilated-cardiomyopathy?fbclid=IwAR09XqB1xp32M98aWSdc7qNjZqzt3F7Uy8Zb_3mPknebwN4jmdhA-ek2d7k#diet

Internet Resources for Researching Pet Food Manufactures:

Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Website:

<https://talkspetfood.aafco.org/>

Researching Pet Foods:

<https://vetnutrition.tufts.edu/2016/12/questions-you-should-be-asking-about-your-pets-food/>

Chart for Specific Brands:

<https://petnutritionalliance.org/chart/index.php/manufacture-report?start=25>

Certified Veterinary Nutrition Specialty Board:

<http://www.acvn.org>

FDA Pet Food Recalls:

<https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/safety-health/recalls-withdrawals>

World Small Animal Veterinary Association Recommendations on selecting pet foods:

<https://www.wsava.org/sites/default/files/Recommendations%20on%20Selecting%20Pet%20Foods.pdf>