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Dog Behavior Series 11 - What Is the Best Dog Food?



So what is the best dog food?

Dog food that is meat based rather than grain based. That is the secret to your dog's optimum health. Low quality dog foods will almost always be grain based and the healthier, higher quality dog foods will be meat, poultry or fish. You'll pay more for meat based dog foods, but the higher the price, the higher the quality; the higher the quality of the ingredients, the greater the nutritional value.

Dogs have to eat more low quality dog food in an attempt to meet their nutritional needs. Again, you may pay more for higher quality but you will buy less because your dog will eat less. So, keep that in mind when looking at the price of higher quality dog foods. Your dog will also pass noticeably less stool when fed a high quality meat based diet.

This is my number one secret for selecting the best dog food. Keep reading, because now I'm going to tell you why, so by the end of this segment you will have acquired enough knowledge on the topic to better understand and come to your own conclusions.



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So, why is a high quality meat based diet so important?

For dogs, meat is the appropriate source of protein and fat is the appropriate source of energy. High quality meat contains all the proteins, vitamins, minerals, and essential nutrients needed for dogs to live a long and healthy life. Yet, carbohydrates have become the dominant nutrient found in most dog foods. Why is this? Because they are abundant, have a long shelf life, and are cheaper than protein and fat. What does this mean? Less expensive dog foods generally include less meat and more animal by-products and grain fillers. Is this good? Keep reading to find out.

Contrary to belief, carbohydrates are not essential for a healthy dog diet. Nor is fiber a required nutrient for dogs. Dogs do not need corn, wheat, barley, oats, brown rice, millet, potatoes, or sweet potatoes. Carbohydrates and fiber are poor substitutes for meat protein and fat. Dogs are carnivores; meat eaters. The best digestible protein sources for a dog are meat, eggs, poultry, and fish; and are far better choices for meat eaters.

Carbohydrates from grains, on the other hand, provide energy in the form of sugars. So keep your dog away from grains as much as humanly possible; unless your dog has medical issues that require a lower protein diet. It is always a good idea to consult with your vet about your dog's dietary needs and to get a clean bill of health.

High protein on a dog food label means absolutely nothing. You have to read the list of ingredients to see if the source of protein is digestible. Dogs are not able to digest plant-based proteins or grains as efficiently as meat and do not derive as much nutrition from them as they need. Meat, on the other hand, is not only high in protein but it is relatively easy for dogs to digest. Therefore, dog food with higher meat protein content is usually better. If the first ingredient on the label is not a meat protein, you should seriously consider switching to a brand with higher meat content. Grains are not as digestible as meats.

Protein content should be at least 30 percent from a high quality meat source. For example; beef, venison, lamb, or chicken. Avoid any product with non-specific descriptions like animal, meat, or poultry; and avoid any rendered by-products or meal.

In a nutshell, most dog owners are feeding their dogs as if they were plant eating herbivores rather than meat eating carnivores. But it is not your fault that producers are not disclosing the truth about the nutritional value of their dog foods, but instead doing everything in their power to convince you they are nutritionally complete and the best food for your dog.

Another Important Factor - Essential Nutrients



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Dogs require a balance of certain fatty acids that must be provided by their diet. Fats are needed for the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K. Fats provide energy as well as taste and flavor to foods. Fat provided by the diet also helps dogs maintain healthy skin and a shiny, healthy coat. Common fats used in dog foods include names like beef fat, pork fat, chicken fat, fish oil, salmon oil, and more. Anything listed as animal fat is very vague and not considered a quality ingredient. Fat content should be at least 18 percent.

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