

# ESSENTIAL PET NUTRITION GUIDE - ACC

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## Choosing the Best Pet Food

Many pet owners ask: “**What is the best pet food?**” The answer is complex, but the key is to evaluate pet food companies based on science-backed criteria. This [Tufts University article](#) by a veterinary nutritionist outlines essential questions to ask any pet food company before choosing their products.

## Veterinarian-Recommended Pet Food Brands

Currently, the most highly recommended pet food brands include:

- **Royal Canin**
- **Purina Pro Plan**
- **Hill's Science Diet**
- **Eukanuba** (sometimes recommended)
- **Victor**

These brands **exceed** the minimum nutrition research standards, ensuring their diets support long-term pet health. Plus, they have safely fed millions of pets over decades without issue. Many of these brands have quick quizzes on their websites to help you choose a good formula for your pet.

## Debunking Grain Myths

Misinformation about grains in pet food has been widely spread by disreputable brands. **Grains are not harmful**—in fact, they provide valuable nutrients. According to [Ohio State University's Veterinary Nutrition Page](#), the fear of grains is a myth.

- **Less than 1% of pets** have a grain allergy.
- Grain-free diets have been linked to **dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM)** in dogs. Research suggests a **strong reason to avoid grain-free diets** due to these risks, especially for breeds already genetically prone to it such as the [Doberman](#). Learn more from [this UC Davis article](#).

## Myths About Veterinary Nutrition Training & Pet Food Companies

There are several misconceptions about veterinarians and pet nutrition:

1. **Veterinarians are not trained in nutrition** – False. Veterinary students take basic nutrition courses taught by board-certified veterinary nutritionists.
2. **Veterinarians receive kickbacks for food recommendations** – False. Other than an occasional **free pen or pizza lunch**, veterinarians receive no compensation from pet food companies.
3. **Vets profit from selling pet food** – False. Veterinary clinics **do not** profit significantly from pet food sales. They stock food **for pet owner convenience**, not for financial gain.
4. **Veterinarians push certain brands for money** – False. Veterinarians are **paid by salary or hourly wages**, meaning their **income does not change** based on what food they recommend. Their only goal is to ensure your pet's health.

## The Raw Diet Debate: A Healthy Choice or a Risky Gamble?

Veterinarians strongly discourage feeding raw diets to both puppies and adult dogs due to serious health risks. While some pet owners believe raw diets offer benefits, these often come from **higher-quality ingredients, not the raw aspect itself**.

### Why Raw Diets Are Risky:

- **Not nutritionally balanced** – Without expert formulation, raw diets often lack essential nutrients.
- **Increased risk of disease** – Raw diets carry a **higher risk of bacterial infections** like **Salmonella, E. coli, and Campylobacter**, which can infect both pets and humans.
- **Bone hazards** – Raw bones pose **choking risks and can cause fatal blockages**.

A peer-reviewed study confirms that dogs fed raw diets experience **higher rates of infections and parasitic conditions**: [PubMed Study](#).

### Veterinarians Weigh In on Raw Diets:

- **Dr. Dina Wild**: "Not nutritionally complete unless formulated by a veterinary nutritionist. High risk of infections for both pets and humans."
- **Dr. Sara Jane**: "I've seen pets die from choking on raw bones. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) discourages raw diets for this reason."

- **Dr. Jennafer Glaesemann:** "Even in cases where a pet needs a limited ingredient diet, I still recommend cooking the food to reduce pathogen risks."
- **Dr. Maria Patinka:** "There is zero scientific evidence supporting benefits of raw diets and overwhelming research proving their dangers."

If you are adamant about feeding either a **raw or home-prepared** diet, consult a board-certified veterinary nutritionist for guidance to ensure it's balanced and safe, you can do so with [American College of Veterinary Nutrition \(ACVN\)](#). For tailored home-cooked diet formulations, visit [Balancelt.com](#)

## The Truth About Raw Eggs for Dogs

- Raw eggs **offer no nutritional benefits** over cooked eggs.
- **Salmonella risk** is high.
- If feeding eggs, **scramble or cook them** to ensure safety.

## Trusted Resources on Pet Nutrition

- Choosing the Best Pet Food: [WSAVA Global Nutrition Guidelines](#)
- What Should I Feed My Pet? [Vet Harmony Guide](#)
- Are Raw Diets Healthy? [Tufts University](#)
- The Truth About Grain-Free Diets: [Tufts University](#)
- Research on Raw Diet Risks:
  - [AVMA Statement](#)
  - [CVMA Statement](#)
  - [FDA Pet Food Safety Guide](#)
  - [CDC Guide to Pet Food Safety](#)

## Final Thoughts

Veterinarians consistently see pets suffer from **poorly formulated diets**, including raw diets. Our goal is to provide **science-based recommendations** that prioritize **your pet's health and longevity**. If any information in this guide becomes outdated, we have enabled commenting on this document. For the best nutrition advice, you can consult a veterinary nutritionist [here](#) and follow evidence-based feeding guidelines from [Tufts Veterinary Nutrition](#).