



The Dog Food Report

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Part 1

The Importance of Choosing Healthy Dog Food

As a pet owner, it is only natural that you want the best for your dog. That includes the quality of food that he eats. The [process of choosing quality food](#) can be difficult for most people. In fact, it can actually be quite exhausting. Take a stroll down any pet food aisle and you will readily concur that there are so many options, each promising different things, that it is difficult to know which one will offer your dog the most benefits.

Would you agree?

One of the reasons it can be so difficult to choose the best pet food is the fact that pet food manufacturers have easily recognized what a big industry pet food products represent. Therefore, a tremendous amount of marketing has gone into the industry.

This makes it all the more confusing.

In addition, pet manufacturers spend a large amount of energy on producing different types of products. Not only must you choose between different brands, but you must also choose among different types of pet food products, including dry, canned and semi-moist foods. As if that were not enough, there are also many food products that are highly targeted, such as gourmet foods, premium foods and senior foods.

Despite all of the confusion, it is imperative to choose the healthiest food possible for your pet. As humans, we all understand the importance of eating healthy foods. When we eat healthy foods, we feel better. Our bodies function better. We have higher levels of energy. We are able to avoid many types of illnesses and diseases.

The same is true for your beloved four-legged friend. While our dogs do not necessarily need the same types of health foods we do in order to enjoy optimal health, they do need healthy food in order to function and feel their best as well as enjoy a long and healthy life.

Dogs that are fed unhealthy diets frequently experience a number of health problems. In addition, they frequently do not have the same levels of energy as dogs that enjoy a healthy diet. That in itself can result in additional problems, such as obesity.

As a result, animals that are not given healthy foods may not be able to experience as long of a lifespan as dogs who eat a healthy diet.

When choosing a healthy food for your dog, it is important to understand that there is a vast difference between the different types of pet foods available. Not only is there a big difference between the different brands but there is also actually a difference present between canned food and dry food. Other feeding options include table scraps and homemade foods.

The differences between all of these foods should be understood when choosing the best, healthiest food for your dog. [Click Here For More Information.](#)

Perhaps some of the unhealthiest foods that can be given to dogs are certain table scraps. Unfortunately, many pet owners indulge their pets by giving them table scraps. They do this either as a special treat or give scraps to their dogs as their primary source of nutrition.

This can be a dangerous error in some instances.

Many of the foods that we enjoy can actually be unhealthy and even dangerous for our dogs, resulting in health problems and a shorter life span. Even in the case of foods that are not dangerous, problems can rise. For example, feeding your dog table scraps may result in the dog

becoming a fussy, temperamental eater. Dogs that are routinely fed table scraps frequently develop an aversion to their regular, healthy food. As a result they may become malnourished.

Not all tinned food has the correct level of nutrients that dogs need to feel their best and be at their healthiest. Like humans, dogs need specific nutrients in order to be at their peak. Dry food, sometimes known as kibble, typically contains all of the nutrients that a dog needs in order to be healthy.

But again, there are [vast differences between different brands](#).

The Importance of Choosing the Right Ratios

When choosing healthy dog food for your pet, it is important to understand that your pet requires specific ratios of proteins, carbohydrates and fats in order to be healthy and achieve adequate levels of development and growth.

When your pet is fed foods that contain either too little or too many nutrients and your dog's health could be in danger. Many of the foods that are available on your grocery store shelf often contain numerous preservatives. Therefore, it is imperative that you [educate yourself](#) about what should be present in the ideal food in order to keep your beloved pet in good health and in shape.

Protein

One of the most important types of nutrients that your dog needs to be healthy is protein. Ideally, your dog's food should contain a ratio of protein that is around 18-28 %. Proteins are important to your dog's health because they contain amino acids. Amino acids are an integral part of muscle development in dogs as well as antibody regulation. Some of the best sources of protein include soy beans, fish and meat.

Carbohydrates

Your dog also needs healthy levels of carbohydrates. In order for your dog to be healthy, he needs between 40% and 60% carbohydrates from his food. Carbohydrates include sugar and starches. These items are transferred into energy which your dog can use. When carb levels are too high in pet food, they are often stored as fat. This can result in obesity as well as other health problems such as digestive issues. Excellent sources of carbohydrates include sweet potatoes and oats.

Fats

Believe it or not, your dog does actually need some levels of fat in order to be healthy. One of the main reasons that your dog needs fat is the fact that it works to keep his skin healthy. Fat can also be beneficial in assisting with health problems such as blood clotting and inflammation. Ideal sources of fat include meat, fish and vegetable oil.

Of course, you will want to make sure that your pet does not receive too much fat, because that can be unhealthy as well. [Healthy dog food](#) should contain about 9- 17% fat.

Vitamins and Minerals

Dogs also need vitamins and minerals in order to remain healthy. Healthy dog foods should be rich in minerals and vitamins in order to assist the dog's development as well as his ability to fight diseases. Numerous vitamins and minerals are needed and each one is essential to good health. Vitamin A, for example, is imperative for your dog's vision as well as for the healthy development of teeth and bones.

Vitamin D is critical for calcium absorption while Vitamin E provides anti-oxidant properties that can assist your pet's body in eliminating toxins. Minerals such as magnesium and calcium are also important as they assist in the development of strong bones and teeth. These minerals are also important for your dog's heart health, as well.

[Choosing healthy dog food](#) for your pet will not only help him to enjoy a more active and healthier lifestyle, but it can also help to prolong his life as well. When a dog is fed a healthy dog food that is well-balanced with all of the elements he needs, it can actually increase his lifespan by as much as 134%.

Understanding Dog Food Labeling

When choosing healthy food for your dog, it is also important to understand dog food labeling. As many people have discovered when shopping for their own food, labels can provide you with a wealth of information when you are trying to choose healthy foods. The same is true with dog food. In order to make the best and healthiest choices for our pets, it is important to make sure that we know how to read as well as understand the information provided on dog food labels.

Dog food labels must contain such specific information as the name of the product, the guaranteed analysis, the nutritional adequacy statement and feeding directions.

The Effects of Poor Quality Dog Food

Dog foods that are poor in quality typically contain a number of filler ingredients, rather than the actual nutrients, vitamins and minerals that your dog needs to be healthy.

A wide variety of issues can result from poor quality dog food, including heart problems, obesity, behavior issues, lack of energy and markedly reduced life span.

Scary thought isn't it?

A close friend of mine had two dogs who both died very young, around age 8. Both had lived a life largely on tinned food and fatty table scraps and I have no doubt that their poor diet contributed to the dog's shortened life span.

One of the reasons for these issues is the fact that POOR quality dog food is provides bulk, not necessarily nutrition. This creates a void of the nutrients that they do need to maintain their healthy. On a human scale, this could be the equivalent of eating junk food or fast food every single day. Humans that subsist on a diet of junk food or fast food are frequently overweight, suffer from heart problems, diabetes and experience mood swings.

The same can be said of a dog that does not receive adequate nutrition through their dog food.

I know, it's not rocket science is it?

Dog Food Recalls

The [recent dog food recalls](#) have shocked most pet owners. Some pet owners suffered the devastation of the loss of a beloved pet due to elements contained in pet foods that proved to be fatal to their dogs. It should certainly seem as though a pet owner should be able to trust the name brands they find on their pet store shelves, but as we have seen, that is not always the case.

Even some of the most expensive brands that are frequently advertised with vigor were found to be completely unsafe and were eventually pulled off the shelves.

This would certainly seem to indicate that price cannot always be a good gauge of quality, and particularly of quality control.

While many pet owners trusted the brands they frequently fed their pets, assured that the foods they were giving their pet owners would not shorten their lives, they soon found out the hard way that the commercial pet food industry was rife with problems.

One of the biggest problems with many of these foods is the fact that ingredients are often imported from other countries; countries where there are no regulations regarding the manufacturing of quality pet food.

As a result, it should really not be surprising that so many dog food brands became contaminated and resulted in the death of several animals. It is still unknown exactly how many dogs may have unnecessarily died as a result of dog food contamination.

One thing is certain: even one death was too many.

Managing the Temperamental or Fussy Eater

Let's change direction a little.

In some cases, dogs are not that much different from people. There are some people who will eat practically anything that is put in front of them. Then, there are some people who are decidedly finicky, fussy eaters.

Dogs are the same way.

Some dogs are very temperamental when it comes to eating. When a dog will not eat, it can be extremely frustrating. You may also find yourself worrying that your pet is not receiving adequate nutrition and may become ill if he does not begin eating soon.

The first step is to take your pet to his or her vet to rule out any possible medical problems. Illness can contribute to an animal having little desire to eat. In some cases, with puppies, a lack of appetite could be due to swollen gums. This commonly occurs between four and six months and will pass after awhile.

Once possible medical problems have been ruled out, there are some techniques you can use to help manage dogs that are simply fussy eaters.

First, it is important to make sure that you are feeding your dog at the same time every day. Consistency is critical. Observe your dog and if he does not eat the food you have provided within about fifteen minutes, pick it up and take it away. The food should not be left out. Generally, after doing this a few times your dog will be ready to eat when food is put out.

Avoid hovering over your dog when you feed him.

Go and occupy yourself with some other task. This not only gives your dog privacy in which to eat, which may be necessary, but it also lets your dog know that you are not concerned about the matter. If you continually hover over him, you may be unconsciously giving the matter more attention than it needs.

Once the allotted amount of time has passed in which you think the food should be left out, about fifteen minutes, take up the food. When feeding time comes around again, make sure you provide your dog with fresh food.

It is also important to make sure that your dog has a quiet area in which to eat.

Is your dog shy?

If that is the case, it could be that your dog needs to feel as though he or she has a safe place in which they can eat. This is often the case with animals that have come from shelters. Good options include a porch or even a kennel. The feeding area should also be free from such distractions as people walking in and out. The goal is to create an area in which your pet can eat in peace and feel safe about it.

You may find that this is all that is needed to encourage your dog to begin eating with no problems.

Additionally, you should make sure that you consistently provide your dog with the same type of food. Many pet owners often constantly change the type of food that is offered. This can be a big mistake because it allows your dog to continually change his mind about the type of food he likes.

Please visit www.DogFoodDangers.com for more information on managing the fussy finicky eater.

Part 2



Handling Toxins and Poisons

As we have previously discussed, not all foods that are suitable for humans are suitable for dogs.

In fact, some of them can be dangerous and even fatal. Someone of you will have heard or read some of [my comments on dangerous food](#) before.

There may be numerous items around your home that could be attractive to dogs, but which could also be quite dangerous. In addition to cleaning agents and poisons, common household plants can also be dangerous to dogs when they are consumed.

Some items may produce minor problems such as vomiting when eaten in small amounts. In other cases, severe symptoms may result. Immediate action and treatment can help to reduce symptoms as well as prevent long term damage or even death.

This is just a sample of some commonly seen dangerous items that dogs could eat.

Apples-When dogs consume large amounts of fruits such as apples, and even apricots, these foods can be toxic to dogs. The most dangerous part of these foods are the seeds, leaves and stems. This is because such fruits contain a compound that is similar to cyanide.

Signs of cyanide poisoning in your dog may include dilated pupils, apprehension, hyperventilation, difficulty breathing and shock. When these symptoms are present, you should seek assistance from your vet.

Amitraz-This is an insecticide that is present in certain brands of topical solutions and dog tick collars. Toxicity generally occurs in puppies who ingest the ingredient. In most cases, symptoms begin within just a few hours. The dog will often become lethargic and weak. Vomiting and diarrhea may also be present. A coma can occur without treatment, as well as death. See your vet immediately for treatment.

Amphetamine-Human medications can be quite dangerous to dogs. Amphetamines are commonly used as appetite suppressants as well as to elevate the mood. These medications can affect the nervous system and the brain. Toxic symptoms typically occur within a couple of hours and may include hyperactivity, restlessness, tremors and seizures. Call the vet immediately for the best chance of recovery.

Amygdalin-Ingestion in a dog may result in depression, diarrhea, vomiting, tremors, lack of appetite, abdominal pain and drooling. Speak to your vet. Antifreeze-When a pet ingests this specific type of poisoning they may come down with ethylene glycol toxicosis. When the pet metabolizes the chemical, it can become very dangerous and even lethal. Severe kidney failure is the common result. Dogs who have ingested antifreeze will commonly stop putting out urine. Prompt treatment, within four to eight hours, is essential. Watch for such symptoms as vomiting, nausea, increased thirst and lethargy.

Aspirin-Aspirin can also be toxic to dogs. This is because dogs, especially young dogs, are not able to metabolize aspirin very quickly. It can result in difficulty with blood clotting. Spontaneous bleeding may occur as a result as well as respiratory problems and kidney failure. When aspirin consumption is suspected, speak to your vet immediately.

Autumn crocus-This is a highly toxic plant that can result in bloody vomiting, kidney failure, shock, diarrhea and liver damage. Call the vet immediately.

Avocados-These fruits can also be toxic to dogs due to the presence of persin, a fatty acid, in the seeds, bark, leaves and even fruit of avocados. Symptoms include enlargement of the abdomen, difficulty breathing and fluid accumulations in the abdomen and chest. Seek assistance from your vet.

Baking Powder and **Baking Soda**-Both of these items are leavening agents which make batter rise. When a dog consumes large amounts of either of these items, it can lead to abnormalities in the dog's electrolytes. Symptoms often include muscle spasm. See your vet immediately as this can cause congestive heart failure.

Burning Bush-Ingestion of this plant may result in diarrhea, vomiting, lack of appetite and depression. When severe, call your vet.

Chocolate-As most people know, chocolate can be fatal to a dog when consumed in large amounts. The reason that chocolate, particularly dark chocolate, can be fatal to dogs is the presence of caffeine as well as methylxanthine alkaloids and theobromine.

When we as humans eat chocolate we are able to digest and then later excrete these items within just a few hours. That is not the case with dogs. It can take much longer for dogs to excrete these items. In some cases it can take as long as 18 hours. Symptoms include diarrhea and vomiting as well as muscle twitching, hyperactivity,

restlessness, excessive panting and increased urination. In severe cases, there may also be seizure activity. Speak to your vet immediately.

Chrysanthemum-May result in depression, vomiting, diarrhea and lack of appetite. When severe, call your vet.

Cleaning Products-Household cleaners can be particularly dangerous and result in chemical burns, especially on the tongue and esophagus. If you witness a dog eating cleaning products, you should immediately flush out the dog's mouth with plenty of water. This can dilute the chemical and possibly reduce damage. Be sure to also call your vet. If you did not witness the incident but suspect it, watch for signs such as excessive swallowing, pawing at the mouth, drooling and a lack of appetite.

Coffee grounds and beans-Dogs that eat coffee beans and grounds can contract caffeine toxicity. The symptoms are often similar to chocolate toxicity and can be even more serious.

Daffodil-Consumption in a dog may result in serious gastrointestinal problems as well as low blood pressure, seizures, convulsion and tremors. Call your vet immediately.

Dairy Products-Generally, dairy products are not often dangerous to dogs but they can result in problems such as pancreatitis when consumed in large amounts. The most common symptom is diarrhea.

Easter Cactus-May result in depression, diarrhea and vomiting. When symptoms appear to be severe, call your vet immediately.

Fatty Foods-Foods that are fatty and rich are often well loved by dogs. That does not mean that they are good for dogs; however. Eating too many fatty, rich foods can result in pancreatitis. Small, toy breeds are particularly prone to this condition. Signs of pancreatitis

include acute vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Speak to your vet as the dog may require antibiotic therapy.

Grapes-Many pet owners are not aware of it, but dogs can actually be poisoned by eating grape as well as raisins. Consumption of grapes and raisins by dogs can result in kidney failure. Without treatment, a dog can die from consuming too many grapes and raisins. The amount depends on the size of the dog. The best chance of survival is to speak to the vet immediately any time a dog eats large amounts of raisins or grapes.

Herbal Medications-Herbal medications can be great for humans, but certain ones dangerous for dogs. Common side effects include vomiting and diarrhea.

Holly-This plant is commonly found in and around homes during the holiday season. Ingestion in a dog can result in diarrhea and vomiting. When severe, speak to your vet.

Hyacinth-May result in severe vomiting, depression, diarrhea and tremors. Call your vet immediately.

Iron-Iron can be important to the production of red blood cells in appropriate amounts. It is frequently included in vitamins and various supplements. When ingested in large amounts it can result in overdose, causing heart and liver damage.

Signs commonly begin to show up within a few hours. One of the most common problems with this type of poisoning is the fact that dogs may appear better after a little while; however, stomach upset will common return along with liver failure, shock and possibly even coma. This is why it is imperative that you contact your vet immediately if you suspect your dog has ingested iron.

Jerusalem cherry-Ingestion of this plant can result in mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea, shock and possibly death. Call your vet

immediately.

Lead-Lead poisoning can be dangerous to dogs as well as people. Several different sources can lead to ingestion of lead, including paint. Lead poisoning can result in diarrhea, vomiting and seizures. A mother dog with lead poisoning can also excrete it in her milk to puppies. Speak to your vet if you suspect lead poisoning

Lily-May result in vomiting, diarrhea and mouth ulcers. When symptoms seem to be serious, you should call your vet.

Macadamia Nuts-Macadamia nuts can also be toxic to dogs. Experts are still unsure exactly why they are toxic; however, as few as six Macadamia nuts can result in severe toxicity. Signs of toxic poisoning include depression, weakness, tremors, vomiting, problems walking, lameness, abdominal pain and stiffness. Generally, symptoms disappear within 24 hours. If symptoms are severe, you should speak with your vet.

Mistletoe-Eating this plant can cause severe diarrhea and vomiting. It can also cause respiratory problems and death when a lot of mistletoe is eaten. Call your vet immediately.

Nutmeg-High levels of nutmeg can be toxic to dogs as well. In some cases, consumption of nutmeg can even be fatal to dogs. Signs and symptoms include seizures, tremors and abnormalities of the nervous system. Speak to your vet immediately.

Onions-Onions can be detrimental to a dog's health due to the fact that dogs simply do not have the enzyme needed to digest onions properly. Symptoms include vomiting, gas and diarrhea. Garlic can cause similar problems. When a dog eats a large amount of onions or garlic, their red blood cells can be impacted. In fact, they can become quite fragile and even begin to break apart.

Signs may not be apparent right away but may appear a few days later. Dogs who consume large amounts of onion or garlic may develop severe anemia and die without treatment.

Potpourri-As much as many of us like the smell of potpourri, it can be dangerous to curious pets. Even licking potpourri can result in chemical burns to the dog's tongue as well as throat and esophagus. Pets who receive severe burns may need feeding tubs. Speak to your vet immediately.

Permethrin Insecticides-These types of insecticides are commonly used to kill fleas. An overdose in a dog can be toxic. Common symptoms and signs include lethargy, drooling, vomiting, muscle tremors and seizures. The first step if you suspect this type of poisoning is to give your dog a lukewarm bath. You should not use flea shampoo when bathing your dog if you suspect that he has ingested permethrin insecticides. Use a mild dish soap instead. Do not use hot water. This can cause the blood vessels in the skin to dilate and cause the flea product to be more easily absorbed. After bathing the pet, call your vet immediately.

Poinsettia-Irritation to the mouth and stomach are common when this plant is ingested. Vomiting may also occur. Generally, this plant has a low level of toxicity and symptoms should disappear soon.

Spoiled Food-Moldy or spoiled food can also be dangerous to dogs. Unfortunately, most dogs have a tendency to get into the trash. Medical problems can occur when dogs consume food that is spoiled. Like humans, dogs can also come down with food poisoning. Certain molds can produce tremors in dogs. Other symptoms may include vomiting and diarrhea. If symptoms persist, speak with the vet.

Tulip-Ingestion in a dog can result in depression, diarrhea, vomiting, lack of appetite and drooling. When severe, call your vet.

Remember that there are also [many non-food items within your home](#) to which your dog may gain access that can cause problems. The best course of action if you think that your dog has gained access to an item that could be dangerous is to check the labeling information.

Some products will even discuss possible pet toxicity. Do not hesitate to call if there is an 800 number on the package. You should also contact your veterinarian. Remember to take all packaging with you to the vet.

Conclusion

Choosing the right food for your dog is tremendously important.

Unlike humans, dogs do not have the ability to review health information on their own and choose the healthiest food on their own.

Our beloved friends rely on us to do what is right for them and feed them the healthiest foods that will allow them to live the healthiest, longest life possible.

In order to choose the best food for your dog, it is extremely important to educate yourself as much as possible about dog nutrition. By learning about the elements of nutrition your dog requires to be strong and healthy and fight disease, you can rest assured that you are giving your furry friend the best possible foods.

Our dogs give so much to us. Loyalty. Companionship. Protection. They deserve the very best we can give them back in return.

All the best for now.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shanda B. P. K." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Please visit us at www.dogfooddangers.com for more information and help with all aspects of your dog's food and nutrition.

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