



CDTS
Cranbourne Dog
Training School

"Positively the best- for you and your dog"

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What To Feed? The Dog Owner's Dilemma

You are what you eat and this is also true of your dog. Your dog's behaviour, happiness, health, longevity and over all well being are all dependant on you feeding him a well-balanced nutritional diet.

Many commercial dog foods although convenient are highly processed and nowadays we understand that highly processed foods are not that good for you and are extremely nutritionally deficient, this also applies to your dog's food.

Forget about what the advert says about how good a food is for your dog. You have to look at what's in it. Forget about price. This works both ways. Just because it costs more doesn't necessarily mean it's better than a less expensive variety.

Following is a quick check list to determine if your dog's food possibly not right for him:

- he doesn't want to eat the food
- he has large, voluminous stools that smell awful
- he has gas
- his teeth get dirty and brown
- his breath smells
- he burps a lot
- he constantly sheds
- he has a dull coat
- he smells like a dog
- he is prone to ear and skin infections
- he has no energy or is hyperactive
- he easily picks up fleas
- he easily picks up worms and has to be wormed frequently
- his immune system is impaired

All of these can happen occasionally with any dog, but only occasionally. When one or more of them occur frequently, or continuously, it's time to find out why.

Your dog is a carnivore and not a vegetarian. He needs meat. His teeth are quite different from ours - they are made for ripping and tearing meat. They do not have flat surfaces for grinding up grains. His digestion starts in his stomach and not in his mouth. All the enzymes in his system are geared to breaking down meat and raw foods. There is no doubt about it, your dog is a carnivore.

When choosing a food for your dog, take time to read the label thoroughly. Look for a food that has animal protein in the first three ingredients. Preferably it should say 'meat' rather than 'meal' or 'derivatives'



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The term meal or derivatives means that the protein can be from any animal, so you are often not sure about the exact protein that you are feeding. The derivatives may also be from the less desirable parts of the animal such as the head and feet, which is not a problem if fed in conjunction with some quality muscle meat, but when exclusively fed does not give adequate good quality protein.

Your dog also needs carbohydrates or grains, and some vegetables for energy, proper digestion, stool formation and the correct functioning of the thyroid gland. Dogs do not need many carbohydrates to be healthy, so a diet low in carbohydrates and high in protein is an ideal diet. Diets high in carbohydrates take a long time to digest, produce voluminous smelly stools and gas. They also build up tartar on your dog's teeth, making his gums sore and his breath smell. Avoid maize, soya and wheat, none of which are particularly good for your dog.

Check the label for foods that contain no artificial additives, preservatives, colours or sugars. Look out for foods that say they are coloured with caramel. Caramel= Sugar!

Your dog does not see colours as we do so doesn't need green coloured biscuits to make him think he's eating his veg. Colours are specifically for the owner.

The argument over wet or dry food is a complex one. People will claim that dry foods are better as they clean your dogs' teeth. This will only happen to a small degree if the dog actually chews it. Often it is swallowed whole and therefore that benefit is lost. Wendy Volhard (see below) believes that tartar build up on dog's teeth is due to an alkaline diet (too much cereal) as opposed to an more acidic diet (more meat based). If you need to clean your dogs' teeth, brush them or something to chew on, there are tripe sticks, dried beef jerky, 'greenies' (veg based chews) and fish skins. All are hard and will clean teeth to a certain degree. We do not advocate rawhide chews due to the preservatives used and the danger of them getting stuck in your dog's gullet. Avoid any chews that contain sugars or colours.

Dry food is the most highly processed of all dog foods and takes a long time for the dog to digest. Dry foods can take up to 15 hours to break down and clear the stomach which is a consideration if the dog is to be exercised. Also, it means that the first meal is still present when you feed the second one. The main reason for this is that the dog does not have the enzymes for breaking down cereals naturally in its stomach and has to manufacture and deliver them from other areas of the body. By comparison raw meat is broken down in about 4 hours and actually starts to leave the stomach in about 20 minutes.

Wet foods sometimes contain sugar but do tend to contain less preservatives as they are vacuum packed. The problem is that moist food can contain up to 80% water so the manufacturers tend to suggest feeding large quantities to make up for the amount of moisture. If you do not feed the large quantities that are suggested for your dog's size, then you are at risk of them not getting enough nutrition from the food.

Some dried foods have a high fat content, and again, as a responsible pet owner, if you decide to feed less as the recommended daily amount is making your dog gain weight, then you are in danger of nutritionally compromising your dog as your dog is not getting the manufacturer's suggested amount of food.



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Below are some foods which we suggest you take a look at. They are brands which we feel are some of the best in their relevant 'types' ie we have listed some dry foods, some wet foods and some raw food suppliers

There are quite a few dried dog foods around now, and the smaller companies do a better job than some of the larger ones. Smaller companies tend to have better quality ingredients

- Akela <http://www.wholeprey.com/akela-80-20-dog-food.html>
- Canagan <https://www.canagan.co.uk/>
- Millies Wolfheart <https://www.millieswolfheart.co.uk/>
- Bob and lush <https://www.bobandlush.com/> (Wet and dried)
- Orijen <http://www.orijenpetfoods.co.uk/>
- Acana <http://www.acanapetfoods.co.uk/>

If you wish to feed Wet food

- Joe and Jack's - <http://www.joeandjacks.co.uk/>
- Naturediet - <http://www.naturediet.co.uk/>
- Bob and Lush (see above)
- Nature's menu
http://naturesmenu.co.uk/products/Pouches_for_Dogs/Dog_Food_Pouches/

One of the better wet foods which uses organic ingredients

- Lilly's kitchen dog food - www.lilyskitchen.co.uk/

If you are interested in a raw diet but do not want to put the ingredients together yourself there are several companies who offer prepacked frozen raw food for dogs

Nutriment <http://www.nutriment.co/>

- Natural Instinct www.naturalinstinct.com
- Honey's Real Dog Food <http://honeysrealdogfood.com/vets.php>
- Wolf Tucker <http://www.wolftucker.co.uk/>
- Nature's Menu <https://www.naturesmenu.co.uk/> (Raw and wet)

It is possible to feed a natural diet using raw meat, cereal and supplements but there is a commitment to be able to supply everything your dog needs and this should not be attempted without expert guidance. Several instructors at CDTS do a raw food diet for their dogs, please speak to Gail or Philippa if you are interested in watching a demo of this.

Most feeds contain little or no vitamin B and C as it is easily destroyed by heat and light. Your dog is able to make his own vitamin C by converting the carbohydrate in the meal to glucose and then into vitamin C. However vitamin C is not stored by the body and is used up rapidly in times of stress. Vitamin C supports the immune system and needs to be present in order for the dog to utilize the animal protein in the diet. This process also requires B vitamins to work. B vitamins also support the nervous system. For dogs of a nervous disposition, or those who get stressed easily, we suggest (with your vets permission) supplementing with Vitamin C twice daily in the form of calcium ascorbate. Please speak to Gail or Philippa for guidance on the amount to feed.

Vitamin B complex –twice daily, again please discuss this as above.



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If you are interested in a natural way to worm your dog, take a look at Verm x at <http://www.verm-x.com/blog.php>

This can be taken either by giving the liquid for 3 days per month or the crunchy biscuits every day.

General rules for feeding would be to never leave food down, if your dog doesn't eat it within 20 mins, then pick it up and put it away, they do not get this back until their next scheduled feed.

Our aim is not to turn you into nutritional experts, but just to make you aware of what you are feeding your dogs and how it can affect them both physically and mentally.

Some internet sites with more information -

- Canine Health Concern - <http://www.canine-health-concern.org.uk/>
- Wendy Volhard's Site - www.volhard.com
- UK Dog Foods - <http://www.best-dog-food-review.com/67901/67953.html>
- Raw Meaty Bones- <http://www.ukrmb.co.uk/>
- Dog Food Analysis - <http://www.dogfoodanalysis.com/>
- Christopher Day holistic vet - <http://www.alternativevet.org/>
- Nick Thompson holistic vet - <http://www.holisticvet.co.uk>

Books to help you research into making decisions on dog foods

- The Holistic Guide to a Healthy Dog – Wendy Volhard
- Foods Pets Die For – Ann Martin
- Pet Allergies – Alfred J Plechner and Martin Zucker
- Raw Meaty Bones – Tom Lonsdale