



If “We are what we eat”, then our dogs are “What we feed them”

Depending on who you speak to, expert opinions differ greatly as to what makes up a good diet for your dog. At one time all in one dried dog foods were on trend however, more recently, there has been a move towards a more ‘natural’ feeding approach of high meat content no cereal diets.

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

Market research suggests that we often feed our dogs either what they were fed before we brought them home, diets that are heavily advertised in the media, recommendations from others and ones which appeal to us the most visually and at a price we are willing to pay!

There are literally hundreds of dog foods on the market, choosing the best one for your dog comes down to personal choice of you and your dog – here are some **things to consider**

Aim to feed a diet that:

- Your dog enjoys, keeps him fit and healthy and at the correct body weight
- Produces low volume, good quality poos! (often soft, high volume faeces = poor gut health and poor quality nutrition)
- Low or no cereal content
- No artificial preservatives
- No artificial colourants
- Clearly identified protein source
- You are happy to feed
- Is within your budget

The old adage – ***“you get what you pay for”*** applies to dog food too.

Cheap foods

Are often poor quality having very little meat content which is not easily identified – the volume of the diet often being ‘bulked out’ with cheap fillers such as cereals and grains. The feeding amounts are often high – high feeding amounts = large poo volumes!

Medium priced foods

Are often better nutritionally than cheaper foods, have easily identified protein source/s but may still contain cereals and some additives.

Higher priced foods

Tend to be more ‘natural’, have a single source protein and are often cereal free. They are much more easily utilized within the body and have a lower feeding volume.

Raw foods

Tends to be the most expensive way to feed, but is as natural as it gets. Always seek advice before changing to a raw diet to ensure it is suitable for your dog.

When comparing different foods be aware that just looking at price is deceptive. The feeding amount must be taken into the equation.

For example: You have a 25kg, adult pet dog which you wish to feed a dry diet

	Pack Size	Pack Price (Prices Aug 17)	Feeding Amount	Cost per day
Poor Quality Diet High in cereals and grains, colourants, preservatives and no listed, easily identifiable meat source.	14kg	£ 27.75	385g daily	73p per day
Premium Quality Diet (One of the best currently available on the market) One identifiable meat source, no colourants, no preservatives with vegetables and fruit added for naturally sourced vitamins and minerals	10kg	£35.00	248g daily	87p per day
For only 14 pence per day more you can feed your dog one of the best diets available on the market currently knowing that you are preventing health and behavioural issues which can arise from poor quality foods.				

READING THE DOG FOOD LABEL

Food labeling can be really confusing! The most important thing on a dog food label is clarity. Each ingredient should be named and ideally given a percentage score so that you understand exactly how much is in the diet. Confusing terms like 'cereals' or 'meat and animal derivatives' can refer to a wide range of ingredients and makes it impossible for you to know what you are feeding. Manufactures are required to list the food ingredients in order of amount on their labelling. So if the first ingredient on the panel is 'rice' then rice will make up the largest proportion of ingredient in that diet. Another confusing factor can be that the same Ingredient can often have different names but actually are the same thing such as sugars which can be listed as dextrose, glucose, syrup, sucrose.

To help you navigate the 'mine field' of the variety of foods available the website:

<https://www.allaboutdogfood.co.uk> is really useful.

It lists most of the dog foods available currently and gives them a score out of 5 enabling you to see where the food you feed sits in the market place and make comparisons with other diets. There is also a lot of other really useful information about pet food ingredients, how to read labels and a guide on how much to feed. It's well worth a look!

TREATS

You may be feeding a really good quality diet but if the treats you are giving are of poor quality then this can upset the nutritional balance. Check for quality, there are some really good quality treats available nowadays which are natural and preservative and colourant free. You can score your treats also on All About Dog Foods website.

Here at Hillview we have extensively researched the food and treats we offer for quality and value for money. Check out the online shop on our website for further details: <http://www.lisajacksondogtraining.co.uk/>

If your dog has any of the these issues: *skin irritation, itchy ears, itchy eyes, not wanting to eat, always appears hungry, won't put on weight, is putting on too much weight, eating his own poo (coprophagia), has loose or very difficult to pick up poo, excessive flatulence*, it could be down to the diet you are feeding.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss further.

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