

The Importance of Good Nutrition

How to Read a Label

Proper diet is pertinent to get the most out of your dog, whether he is just a family pet, or a working police K-9. Just like us humans, poor diet can result in lack of concentration, energy, stamina, and an increase in behavioural, reproductive and immune system problems. Inadequate nutrition can make your dog feel poorly and act aggressively.

Finding--and feeding--a good diet is crucial to ensure good overall health and maximize immunity strength. A *GOOD* quality food may be a bit less cost effective than some other commercial brands, but the benefits in feeding a diet high in *GOOD* nutrition are feeding *LESS* food (because your dog is gaining *MORE*), less frequent vet trips, healthier skin and coat, and smaller stools (meaning less clean-up!) just to name a few. Speaking of stools, if your dog's are consistently large in size, it may be that he needs a change in diet. Smaller stools mean he is absorbing more nutrition from his food, resulting in less waste.

Find foods that are free from corn, wheat, and cereal grains. These are commonly used as 'filler' foods- basically, they are added to make your dog feel full after eating, but don't offer much-if any- nutritional value. Often when you read pet food labels, the protein sources may state things like 'animal derivatives', 'chicken meal', 'poultry meal' or 'by-products'. What do these terms mean? Any food that says 'animal' in the ingredients should be avoided. Animal could mean anything from chicken to rabbit to beef to lamb. You don't know what the source is because it says 'animal'. Would you go to your local chippy and order an 'animal' burger?

Here's what to look for, and what to avoid:

-Meat is the best choice. Look for foods that name the protein source meat (i.e. chicken meat).

-Meals are not as good, but better than by-products. Meal is basically what is left over after the meat to be sold for human consumption is removed. This can include organ meats and bones.

-By-product/derivative is by far the worst choice for a food source. By-product is what is ground up after the meat and meal have been used up. These can include hooves, bones, beaks, and as in vegetable derivative, roots, stalks or even the soil used to grow the vegetable, plus other unmentionables. By-product is cheaper to purchase, so therefore it means a cheaper cost per pound to you, the buyer.

-Be wary of 'cereals' included into the ingredient list as well. Cereals, for lack of a better description, is what is dropped on the floor during normal food processing. This could be grains, additives, or even meat pieces. This is added to reduce waste of product and make for a inexpensive food. *note: cereals is a term for grains (wheats, rice, barley etc.) please do not confuse the two- unless it states exactly what's in it, don't trust it!

Yes, we realize that some of you may think, 'Well, its just a dog. I watch him eating rather disgusting things all the time!'. That may be true, but he isn't basing his entire diet on it. Your dog has no choice but to eat what you provide for him! Doesn't he deserve the best you can afford? We have results with our dogs, and they LOVE their food. We have seen a decrease in skin problems, allergies, infection, aggression and lameness, and an increase in healthy coat, positive energy, and concentration. We believe the start to a well-behaved, happy dog begins with adequate, balanced nutrition.