

Feeding

Let's stop and think about feeding for just a minute. Forget about advertising. Forget about what we have been told. Let's put on our thinking caps, use a bit of common sense, and think for ourselves. Think about what is considered good food for humans. What does a cow or horse eat? How about zoo animals--what do they eat? Do animals get viruses like us? Of course! Do animals get degenerative diseases such as cancer like us? Of course? Do they have an immune system like us? Of course!

Do you believe the immune system is influenced by diet? Of course! If we eat better, do we tend to be healthier? Of course! Which is healthier for humans--highly processed food such as hot dogs, potato chips and candy -or- unprocessed food such as chicken, potatoes and fruit/vegetables? We all know the answer to that one!

Is there ANY reason to believe our dogs are completely different from humans, farm animals or zoo animals? They get sick like us. They get cancer like us. They get arthritis like us. They have an immune system like us. In fact dogs share 25% of the exact DNA with humans and we are more alike to each other than either of us are to mice! And their immune system IS affected by diet--just like ours.

Now how about quality of ingredients. Which is healthier--fresh, inspected whole chicken -or- the diseased and/or otherwise leftover parts such as carcasses, beaks, skin, feathers and such? Is it healthier for us to eat whole grains or highly processed rice flour? Do vegetables contribute phytochemicals, nutrients and other things that enhance health? Is there any reason to believe this wouldn't apply to other mammals such as the dog?

Now, grab a bag of dog food and look at the ingredient list. How many ingredients do you recognize? How many are a bunch of chemical names? (LOTS!) Those chemical names are ALL the added vitamins and minerals. Why were all those vitamins and minerals added to the dog food? Could it have something to do with the fact that dog food has been so highly processed/cooked that there is little nutrition left in it? So little that the vitamins and minerals have to be added BACK into the food to make it nutritionally good? Could this stuff actually be GOOD for our dogs? Think about it! Do you think taking that lovely chicken, rice and salad dinner--baking it in your oven for hours until all the water is evaporated, then feeding it to your children along with a vitamin/mineral supplement would be as good for your children as feeding it to them fresh and whole--with ALL the nutrients still intact, including the ones we don't know about yet?

NOT ON YOUR LIFE!

Dogs are much healthier on fresh food, just as we humans are. For some reason dog food companies have done their best to convince us otherwise, but if we use common sense we know better. The best thing to feed your dog is fresh, whole food. Unfortunately dogs do need a different balance of nutrients as compared to humans. And they tend to be smaller so a balanced diet is more critical as

shortages are more like to show up quickly. Little research has been done so far on how to feed dogs fresh food properly. It can be a rather tricky thing to do.

Luckily we have two options that work for now.

(1) We can feed a commercially prepared whole foods diet. There are companies who make fresh whole food dog diets and flash freeze them. We can buy them and keep them in the freezer until ready to be used. Then we can thaw and feed. Some of the better known ones are:

AFS
www.naturalpetfood.com/meat.html

Nature's Variety
www.naturesvariety.com
The only one officially AAFCO tested and certified.

Pet Naturaw
<http://www.pawnaturaw.com/>

Halshan Diet
<http://www.halshan.com/products.html>

m'Origins
<http://d21c.com/buddyx2/MORIGINS/mORIGINS4.html>

Steve's Real Food
www.stevesrealfood.com

Aunt Jenni's Homemade for Life
www.homemade4life.com/index.html

Primitive Pets
www.teddyfreezer.com/

Fargo Foods
www.fargoresearch.com/

Primal
www.primalpetfoods.com

Three Cheers Raw! Raw! Raw
<http://aplaceforpaws.com/threcheerpet.html>

These foods are completely formulated and balanced according to the same AAFCO guidelines as dog kibble. These are our best alternative to a completely homemade diet and the only whole foods diet I recommend until we have done more research on how to feed our dogs.

(2) We can feed a top quality dog kibble along with a small amount of vegetables. More information on how to choose a top quality dog kibble will follow.

Somewhere along the line the pet food companies convinced both the vets and us that THEIR food is the best for our dogs. But if we use common sense we can see this cannot be true.

There are many different high quality kibbles. Some good ones at this point in time include the following: Wellness, Innova Evo, Ziwi (<http://www.ziwipeak.com/nzl/home.shtml#>), Orijen (<http://www.orijen.ca/orijen/about/>), Kirkland (very much like the old Canidae), Organix, and Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul, along with organic mixed baby greens, occasional raw frozen diets such as Nature's Variety, Three Cheers Raw! Raw! Raw!, or Farmore and other fruits and vegetables. I love the Organix--it uses several organic ingredients, has a good list of ingredients and my dogs love it. Ultramix is from the same company only is not an organic food. Unbelievably enough my local Giant Eagle store carries Organix and Ultramix--the first time I've ever seen a quality food in a grocery store. Most of these can now be purchased at Pet Supplies Plus stores. I believe both can be purchased on-line through www.petfooddirect.com as well, some through www.amazon.com and many other places on the internet. Some of the same places that carry these foods also carry high quality snacks such as Dr. Becker's Bison Liver bites and freeze-dried diets such as Stella and Chewy's.

I would never, EVER feed a typical grocery store bought dog kibble as their quality is quite inferior to Canidae and some of the other dog kibbles. This includes Iams and Science Diet which I consider very poor quality as compared to the ones I've mentioned (compare the ingredients to see why!).

I will NOT feed a Puppy Food either. My dogs get only a quality Adult Food. At one time dog kibble was so poor in quality that if you did not feed a puppy food, the puppy would not get the nourishment it needed. Today the problem as reversed. Puppy foods are so powerful they actually cause the bones of a puppy to grow more quickly than the surrounding tissues are able to. This causes uneven development and may exaggerate any genetic predisposition to skeletal problems such as hip dysplasia or patellar luxation. Feed a high quality adult kibble ONLY.

More info on feeding at this site:

<http://www.dogaware.com/dogfeeding.html#addfoo>

FEEDING DIRECTIONS

Whether you decide to feed a high quality kibble or a commercially prepared whole foods diet, the following directions will apply.

Puppies between 8 and 16 weeks of age do quite well on 3 meals a day. They start out with about a large handful of kibble for each meal or about 1/4 cup. At about 3 to 6 months of age you may begin feeding your puppy twice a day, about 1/2 cup or so each time. Somewhere between 10 and 18 months of age you may begin feeding just once a day--with some really good eaters you may need to feed just once a day by 6 or 7 months of age.

Each time you feed your puppy, put the food down for approximately 15 minutes. If the puppy hasn't finished it after 15 minutes, pick it up and put it away until the next feeding time. Do NOT try to feed in

between. Refrigerate if you are feeding a commercially prepared whole foods diet. Do not worry if your puppy appears thin. Puppies are just like humans. Some are very thin while growing up and some are not. It is highly unlikely your puppy will starve itself unless it is already ill. A puppy that grows slowly is best--there is no first prize for gaining full size as early as possible! Puppies who grow slowly are more likely to be able to develop muscle and tissue at the correct rate to keep up the bone development. Of course some puppies are gluttons! Be careful not to overfeed a glutton.

As adults some Cavaliers may only eat 1/2 cup of food per day, others may eat as much as 1 full cup of food per day. I do not suggest feeding an adult Cavalier twice a day even though it is best for the dog. Cavaliers do not eat much! Half of very little is almost nothing! Nearly every owner I've known who tried to feed an adult twice a day ended up with an overweight Cavalier. When they try to divide 1/2 or 2/3 cup of kibble into two servings the amount barely covers the bottom of the pan--so they add just a little bit more so they don't feel as though they are starving their Cavalier. A little bit more every meal eventually ends up being a lot more! And their Cavalier becomes overweight. With one meal a day the amount looks to our eyes as though it is a half way decent amount and we are much less likely to add just a little bit more each day.

Here is an interesting article on feeding and dog's stomachs:

<http://k9joy.com/dogarticles/dogfood01stomach.pdf>

Due to MVD, being overweight is nearly a death sentence for a Cavalier. I guarantee you the best way to prolong your Cavalier's life is to keep its weight to a MINIMUM! Not overweight even a little bit. THIN! If your Cavalier is even a little bit overweight, it will hasten the onset of MVD and death. Do not allow this to happen.

HOW MUCH DO I FEED AND IS MY DOG OVERWEIGHT?

There is no way to tell you just how much your dog will need so far as quantity of kibble. Cavaliers vary GREATLY in their activity level. I know some 20 lbs. dogs that only need 1/2 cup of food a day and others that need a full cup or even more. I know some 10 lbs. dogs that only need 1/3 cup of food a day and others that need a full cup or even more. It is too dependent on the metabolism and activity level of each individual dog. You will have to use a hit and miss approach to figure out which amount is right for your dog. Try 2/3 of a cup to 1 full cup per day for an adult Cavalier over 1 year of age and watch to see if the dog is gaining weight or losing weight. Adjust accordingly. If they seem to be getting heavier, cut back. If they seem to be getting lighter, feed more. Also most dogs will need more food when the temperature outside is colder. Now how do you tell if your dog is getting heavy or not? Hopefully the following will help you figure that out.

Your vet is not the person to ask! Over the years I have been amazed to find out that vets are very reluctant to tell an owner their dog is overweight until the dog is quite overweight--till the dog is so overweight it is very hard to get it off. Here are two ways to judge if your dog is overweight.

First is the rib test. Look for a hand towel or dish towel in your house. Fold it in half. Find a wire crate, wire fencing or ex-pen, something with wire not spaced too far apart. Rub the towel over the wire several times and get used to how it feels. How does the wire feel, how easily does the towel move under your fingers? Now rub your fingers over the ribs on your dog. It should feel quite similar. A VERY thin amount of skin that moves easily over the ribs--ribs which can easily be felt and counted. If you feel some padding under the skin, the dog is mildly overweight. If you feel a lot of padding, you have to press a bit to feel individual ribs, and the skin doesn't move around easily--the dog is definitely overweight.

The second test is the waist test. Stand over your dog and look down at it while it is standing with the dog facing the same direction as you are. You can also use your hands with this test. As you are looking down at the dog you can see where the ribs are. If you are not sure run your hands from the shoulders over the ribs down to where the ribs end so you will know just where the ribs are. After the last rib, and before the hips, you should see a distinct indentation--a waist. If you can barely see an indentation, the dog is mildly overweight. If there is no indentation at all, the dog is definitely overweight. The following are three pictures of dogs. None are really overweight, but they will help somewhat in teaching you what to look for as some are have a tinch more weight than they should. I hope to get a picture of a very thin Cavalier and a very heavy Cavalier at some point in the future.



1



2



3

The arrows are pointing at the waist of each dog. Dog #1 in in pretty good weight. #2 is a bit heavier and lacking some waist, but both are in decent weight. Dog #3 is definitely much heavier. The dog has no noticeable waist as you can see and needs to lose several pounds.

HOW DO I GET MY DOG TO LOSE WEIGHT?

The same as humans--less food and more exercise!

Less Food: cut back to about 1/2 of what you had been feeding. If you are feeding kibble, take 1/2 of what you plan on giving your dog and soak it long enough so that it expands. Mix the dry in with the wet expanded food. The expanded food will help your dog feel a bit more full right after eating. Then add about 1/2 cup of green beans--fresh or thawed frozen (canned has too much salt) to the top and feed. The green beans are a very low calorie filler and quite good for your dog too!

If the dog isn't losing weight within 2 weeks, cut back on the food even more.

Some Ideas for More Exercise: try to take your dog for a walk daily, especially if you don't normally do so. If you can't do that for whatever reason, attempt to play fetch or whatever with your dog for 15 minutes a day. Tether your dog to you while you are working around the house so the dog has to go with you instead of sleeping on the couch. Try a buster cube with a few treats inside. That might help keep the dog busy for a bit. Throw the dog's kibble so it has to go and get it--either the treats or even the dog's entire meal.

The following is an article written by Jennifer Harris. It is a couple of years old so some of the newer kibbles I've mentioned are not on it--they didn't exist at the time she wrote this article.

ASSESSING A DOG KIBBLE

Before I became educated on dog nutrition I went by word of mouth and fed all my Rotties Iams/Eukanuba thinking it was the best thing I could give them, after all my vet sells it, and all the commercials say it's the best, everyone seems to think it's one of the best, so it must be the best--right? NOT! Same goes for Science Diet, and some of the other more expensive dog foods that you hear a lot about, they are not as good as we are led to believe.

Once I actually researched dog nutrition I learned what type of diet a dogs body is intended to have, and once I learned how to decipher the ingredient list I was surprised at the poor quality of the food I was getting for the money that I was paying for it. Why was it so expensive if it's not so good? Well, these companies need all that money they can get to pay for their expensive advertising claiming that they're the best. They also pay the veterinarians very well to sell and market their food too. Most of the best foods out there are foods you have never seen or heard of because they do not advertise. All of their money goes straight into their foods, using top ingredients only. These food companies are also more picky about who they will let sell their foods. You will NEVER find any of these good foods on a grocery store shelf, but more commonly at a feed store or small pet boutique. Most of the foods can also be ordered online and delivered right to your door. My local Agway sells my top food choices.

The following information comes from the Whole Dog Journal which is a well known, respected journal often subscribed to by Veterinarians, Dog breeders, and average pet owners who want to stay up to date with the latest dog health information. Keep in mind that the following list is only listed ALPHABETICALLY and NOT in any favored order (not best to worst).

My favorite food on this list is "Wellness" made by Old Mother Hubbard. It

has excellent "human grade" (human consumable meat) protein sources at the top of the list, fruits, veggies, antioxidants, and healthy herbs and supplements added in. It's also lacking in some of the allergy causing ingredients that some other foods contain such as wheat, corn, soybean, animal fat, egg, or dairy products. They use only "all-natural" ingredients, and no artificial flavors or flavor enhancers. Many people have recently turned to Raw food diets, finding it to be the healthiest way to feed a dog. If you want the health benefits seen from a raw food diet, but you don't have the time or effort, or you are worried about possible contamination with raw meats, than Wellness is a great kibble choice since it is made out of many of the same foods that a Raw food diet comes from (such as meats, fruits, veggies, herbs, supplements), and it leaves out all of the poor, and harmful ingredients that many other dog foods contain (too much grain, preservatives, disgusting protein sources, dangerous chemicals, etc..). I would consider this food to be one of the closest diets to a Raw food diet that you can buy in a bag. I also like the fact the you can get "Wellness" in a variety of flavors such as Chicken, Lamb, and Ocean Whitefish. We most commonly use the chicken but occasionally use a different flavor for variety which is good for dogs, they are not intended to have the same exact food every day of their lives as we have been led to believe. It is best to alternate between your top dog food choices or flavors for optimal nutrition. We will also occasionally alternate with California Natural and Innova. Our dogs love Wellness and have never looked healthier than they do now.

Do your dog a favor and feed them one of the foods on the list at the end of this page. You will be giving them a longer, healthier, happier life to live out and enjoy with you. Not to mention all the \$\$\$ you'll be saving on vet bills.

Jennifer Harris

What to look for on the ingredient list.

Quality Foods Should Contain:

Superior sources of protein, either whole fresh meats or single source meat meal (ex. chicken meal rather than poultry meal)

A whole-meat source as one of the first two ingredients.

Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables, and other foods. Nutrients and enzymes are more likely to be found in unprocessed foods.

Quality foods should contain very little to NONE of the following:

Food fragments - lower-cost by-products of another food manufacturing process,

such as brewer's rice and wheat bran...Manufacturers usually include at least one fragment to help lower costs. Beware any food that includes several fragments.

Meat by-products (not handled as carefully as whole meat) - any food that contains meat by-products as the MAJOR protein source indicates a low-quality product.

HIGH-QUALITY FOODS SHOULD NOT CONTAIN:

Fats or proteins named generically (ex. animal fat/poultry fat instead of beef fat/ lamb meal)

Artificial preservatives (BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin)

Artificial colors.

Sweeteners (corn syrup, sucrose, ammoniated glycyrrhizin) to improve unappealing food
Propylene glycol - a toxic substance when consumed in large amounts; added to some "chewy" foods to keep them moist.

How to Grade Your Dog's Food

Start with a grade of 100:

- 1) For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points**
- 2) For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal or fat) reference, subtract 10 points**
- 3) If the food contains BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points**
- 4) For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source, subtract 5 points**
- 5) If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (I.e. "ground brown rice", "brewers rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points**
- 6) If the protein sources are not meat meal and there are less than 2 meats in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points**
- 7) If it contains any artificial colorants, subtract 3 points**
- 8) If it contains ground corn or whole grain corn, subtract 3 points**
- 9) If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 2 more points**
- 10) If the food contains any animal fat other than fish oil, subtract 2 points**
- 11) If lamb is the only animal protein source (unless your dog is allergic to other protein sources), subtract 2 points**
- 12) If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points**
- 13) If it contains wheat (unless you know that your dog is not allergic to wheat), subtract 2 points**
- 14) If it contains beef (unless you know that your dog is not allergic**

to beef), subtract 1 point
15) If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

Extra Credit:

- 1) If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
- 2) If the food is endorsed by any major breed group or nutritionist, add 5 points
- 3) If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
- 4) If the food contains probiotics, add 3 points
- 5) If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
- 6) If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
- 7) If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibiotic-free, add 2 points
- 8) If the food contains barley, add 2 points
- 9) If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points
- 10) If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
- 11) If the food contains sunflower oil, add 1 point
- 12) For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; count "chicken" and "chicken meal" as only one protein source, but "chicken" and "" as 2 different sources), add 1 point
- 13) If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point
- 14) If the vegetables have been tested for pesticides and are pesticide-free, add 1 point

Score:

94-100+ = A 86-93 = B 78-85 = C 70-77 = D 69 and below = F

Here are some foods that have already been scored:

Authority Harvest Baked / Score 116 A+
Bil-Jac Select / Score 68 F
Canidae / Score 112 A+
Chicken Soup Senior / Score 115 A+
Diamond Maintenance / Score 64 F
Diamond Lamb Meal & Rice / Score 92 B
Diamond Large Breed 60+ Formula / Score 99 A
Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance Ultra Premium / Score 122 A+
Dick Van Patten's Duck and Potato / Score 106 A+
Foundations / Score 106 A+
Hund-n-Flocken Adult Dog (lamb) by Solid Gold / Score 93 B
Iams Lamb Meal & Rice Formula Premium / Score 73 D
Innova Dog / Score 114 A+
Innova Evo / Score 114 A+
Kirkland Signature Chicken, Rice, and Vegetables / Score 110 A+
Nutrisource Lamb and Rice / Score 87 B
Nutro Natural Choice Large Breed Puppy / Score 87 B
Pet Gold Adult with Lamb & Rice / Score 23 F
ProPlan Natural Turkey & Barley / Score 103 A+
Purina Beneful / Score 17 F
Purina Dog / Score 62 F
Purina Come-n-Get It / Score 16 F
Royal Canin Bulldog / Score 100 A+
Royal Canin Natural Blend Adult / Score 106 A+
Sensible Choice Chicken and Rice / Score 97 A
Science Diet Advanced Protein Senior 7+ / Score 63 F
Science Diet for Large Breed Puppies / Score 69 F

Wellness Super5 Mix Chicken / Score 110 A+
Wolfking Adult Dog (bison) by Solid Gold / Score 97 A

Suggested Reading:

- "Give Your Dog a Bone" by Dr. Ian Billinghurst.
"Grow Your Pups With Bones" by Dr. Ian Billinghurst.
"The Ultimate Diet" by Kymythy Schultze.
"The Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog" by Wendy Volhard & Kerry Brown,
DVM
"Natural Health for Dogs&Cats" by Dr. Richard H. Pitcairn, DVM, Ph.D. and S.
H. Pitcairn
"Home-Prepared Dog&Cat Diets,The Healthful Alternative" by Donald R.
Strombeck, DVM
"Earl Mindell's Nutrition&Health for Dogs" by Earl Mindell, R.Ph., Ph.D. & E.
Renaghan
"The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care" by C. J. Puotinen
"Natural Dog Care" by Celeste Yarnall, Ph.D.
"Why is Cancer Killing Our Pets" by Debra Straw
"The Whole Dog Journal" a monthly guide to natural dog care and training.
I STRONGLY recommend this magazine.
1-800-829-9165 or www.whole-dog-journal.com

Good place to buy wholesome food and treats.
[My Fresh Pet](#)