

# Nutrition

## Comparing pet food labels. Is your pet's food complete and balanced?

1. Is the food appropriate for your pet's age?
  - Puppy/ Kitten
  - Adult
  - Senior
  - All Life Stages

Puppy/ Kitten foods are meant for growing they use higher calories to meet energy and growth requirements, large breed puppies need to be on a low calcium diet.

An all life stage food is known as a puppy food which can cause adults to become obese and senior dogs can get too much nutrients from it. Senior pets require lower nutrients levels for phosphorus and sodium.

2. Is the food safe for your pet's health status?
  - High or low Protein
  - Low Carbs
  - Low Sodium
  - Hypoallergenic

Pets who have a diagnosed disease require certain dietary requirements that most over counter pet foods cannot meet or guarantee accurate ingredients.

3. Is the food measured on a dry matter, as fed, or wet matter basis?
  - These three basis cannot be compared equally until converted into a dry matter basis for all ingredients.
4. Has the food been tested in a food trial setting and proven to be healthy or is the food a calculated formula?

## AAFCO – Association of American Feed Control Officials.

1. This organization sets nutritional standards for pet foods sold in the United States. There are two methods based on nutritional levels and procedures.
  - **Formulation Method:**
    - This method is less expensive and results are determined quickly because feeding and



digestibility trials are not required.

- There is no guarantee of pet acceptance or nutritional bioavailability.
  - **Feeding Trial Method**
    - The "Gold Standard" for determining nutritional adequacy. The Manufacturer must perform a AAFCO protocol feeding trial.

## Truth about Corn -

- Corn is not a Filler. It provides Proteins, Antioxidants, Fatty Acids, and Carbohydrates.
- Corn is highly digestible and versatile, more than rice, wheat, barley, sorghum.

## Feeding your pet two times daily is recommended rather than free feeding.

- By doing this you can more easily track when you pets appetite is decreased, monitor calorie intake, and associate good behavior with owners.
- Treats should be no more than 10% of your pet's daily diet. High calorie treats can be substituted for healthy treats:
  - Broccoli, Green Beans, Carrots, Apples

## Exercise is important:

### FOR CATS

- Put small amounts of food in multiple bowls in different locations throughout the house
- Create a natural obstacle course, in or around your house that your pet can jump over, crawl over or balance on
- Play with toys, Play with a laser pointer and finding the kibble.
- Toss kibble for the cat to catch instead of putting kibble in the bowl

### FOR DOGS

- Take a 30-minute walk around your neighborhood

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- Play fetch with a ball or toy or hide a toy around the house for your pet to find
- Place kibbles inside a food puzzle
- Toss kibbles for the dog to catch instead of putting them in a bowl

## Transition between new diets:

1. Sometimes GI upset can occur if a new food is not introduced slowly.
2. Start the new food off as ¼ new food and ¾ old food for 2 days
3. Then do ½ of new and old for 2 days
4. Finish with ¾ new food and ¼ old food for 2 day

## Transition can be difficult at times, here are some tips:

- Add low-salt flavored broth, Chicken or beef for dogs and tuna or clam for cats.
- Add oregano
- For dogs and a small amount of corn-syrup (if not diabetic)
- Warm the food

## Food allergies in pets:

- Food allergies in pets is less than %30, most allergies are from environment. If you pet does have a food allergy it is most likely one of the following:
  - Dogs – Beef, Chicken, Wheat, Dairy Products
  - Cats – Beef, Fish, Dairy Products

A food trial may be recommend by your veterinarian if they fill it is necessary.

## Definitions:

- **By-Products** – Secondary products produced from the first. They are common ingredients in human and pet food, simply something made from making something else.
  - Ex. Vitamin E is a by-product from soy beans, Chicken liver is a by-product from chicken factory.
- **Nutrient** – A substance that must be consumed as part of a diet to provide energy and help in growth.

- **Filler** – A food ingredient that supplies no nutrients and serves no purpose.
- **Antioxidants** – Protect key cell components from damage.
- **Fatty Acids** – Used for healthy skin and coat, they also serve important roles in the immune system and central nervous system.
- **Carbohydrate** – Important source of energy.
- **Organic** – Grown with only animal or vegetable fertilizer.
- **Natural** – Produced, arising, or existing in nature.
  - If regulations are met, then the food company can display the word “organic” or “natural” in the title. If they have not met regulations, then they are *still* allowed to claim it anywhere else on the bag.
- **Holistic** – there is NO legal definition to define what this term and any food company can label their product with “holistic.”

## Ingredients vs nutrients

Ingredients are used to achieve the nutritional and palatability goals of a food product. It may supply many nutrients or none.

Nutrient is a substance that must be consumed as part of the diet to provide source of energy, material for growth or used to regulate growth and energy.

- Ingredients should be selected for nutrients, quality, and taste.
- A balance should deliver quality protein, fat, carbohydrate, fiber, vitamins and minerals to meet nutritional needs.

## Common Food Problems:

- High levels of calcium (can be caused due to high amounts of bone included)
- High levels of minerals
- Salmonella contamination
- High levels of carbohydrates

