

FEED YOUR PET RIGHT!

Become an Ingredient Reader

Ingredients on a pet food must be listed in descending order (by weight) on the package. Typically, the first five to seven ingredients are the major ingredients in the food. These ingredients should be real named meat and vegetables to ensure a pet is getting excellent nutrition from the best natural ingredients. Avoid foods that list by-products, unnamed meat meals or partial grains (for example "poultry by-product meal", "meat meal", or "corn-gluten meal", etc.), as these are sub-standard sources of protein. Unless "meat meal" is carefully sourced, it may contain a variety of animal parts (other than meat). There are regulations about how a pet food can be named using its ingredients. For example, to be called "turkey cat food", it must contain 95% turkey; "turkey entrée", "turkey grill" or "turkey dinner" must contain only 25% turkey; "cat food with turkey" requires only 3% turkey. Although these products sound similar, they obviously are of very different quality.

Avoid Potentially Harmful Ingredients

When used in the production of pet food, artificial preservatives limit the growth of bacteria or inhibit oxidation of food. Many artificial preservatives are known to be capable of, or suspected of, causing cancer (carcinogens). Preservatives that should be avoided include BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin, sodium nitrite and nitrate. Look for natural preservatives such as vitamin E (mixed tocopherols), vitamin C (ascorbic acid), and extracts of various plants, such as rosemary.

Avoid artificial flavors and colorings/dyes. Artificial flavors (e.g. corn syrup, propylene glycol and MSG) are used in pet food manufacturing to disguise inferior food quality and some of these additives give moisture to foods and treats. Artificial colorings/dyes are used in many pet products to entice a purchase; however, they have no nutritional value and may be responsible for adverse or allergic reactions.

Avoid Unnecessary Fillers

A filler is an ingredient added to a pet food that provides dietary fiber, or an inexpensive way to meet nutritional requirements for protein and fat. While pets do require a source of fiber in their diet, it is best that this fiber is provided by fruits and vegetables. Ingredients such as wheat bran, rice bran, corn bran, and pulps; along with cheap grains like corn, corn gluten or corn germ meal, and soybean meal; are best avoided. With their biology, cats and dogs should get the majority of their protein from real meat and high quality named meat meals, instead of plants, to best address their nutritional requirements. Whole grains such as rice and oatmeal may be of support to some pets.

Variety is the Spice of Life!

Diversity is critical in pet food, to avoid allergic responses. There is no one food for perfect health, but instead choose diverse foods for your pets as you do for yourself. Switching foods every 2 - 3 months can help avoid incidence of food allergies, with a several day transition of mixing the foods.

Thank you for caring about your pet's health! The staff at the Holistic Pet Center.