

How to Read Dog Food Nutrition Label?

The nutrition label on your dog's food, like any other nutrition label on the packaged food for us, is designed to help us to compare the products and learn better about the food with that package. But it could be a little bit harder to decipher. Here is a simple guide to help pet-owners understand how to read dog food labels:

Byproducts – should you avoid the dog foods that contain by products

Vets say that it is matter of one's own personal choice. All pet foods that are labeled "balanced and complete" must meet the nutritional needs of your dog.

Liver, a byproduct, is high in nutrients like vitamin A. The meat byproducts contain blood, brains, bone, udders, cleaned intestines, and stomachs as well. Byproducts do not include hair, teeth, hooves, and horns, although exceptions might be allowed for the amount that occurs during processing, unavoidably.

Meat might contain animal parts as well which a lot of people consider byproducts. Ingredients that are listed "beef" or "chicken" might include heart, tongue, diaphragm, and esophagus. Although these ingredients might sound a bit unpalatable to a lot of people, your dogs would most probably disagree with you. So, the next time you [buy dog food online](#) or from store, do not balk seeing byproducts as part of the nutrition label of your dog food.



What's those chemical-sounding ingredients on the ingredients' list

Artificial colors, stabilizers, and preservatives in pet's food needs to be approved by FDA or it should be recognized as safe – a category which includes everything from benzoyl peroxide to high-fructose corn syrup. Manufacturers should list all the preservatives that they add to dog food, but they don't always list all of it in ingredient like chicken and fish meal which are processed elsewhere.

Some pet-owners do not want to buy dog food which contains synthetic preservatives BHT, ethoxyquin, or BHA. These preservatives stop fats from turning bad or rancid and it can keep dry food for dog fresh for nearly a year, but their safety continues to be questioned by certain scientists and consumers. However, FDA assures that they are safe at the level that is used in dog's food.

How to ensure that the food is meeting your dog's needs

Just look for the statement of nutritional adequacy that's on the dog food label.

A lot of pet food manufacturers follow the model regulations set by concerned department of government which established the basic amount of nutrients that is required to provide a balanced and complete diet. The statement might state that the food is formulated in order to meet the due standards or that it's tested in several feeding trials and is found to provide the nutrition required.

This statement needs to specify what life stage is this food appropriate for, suggests an expert at the [pet shop online](#). For the puppies, look for foods that are suitable for growth stages or for all-life stages. For the adult dogs, you need to choose ones that are meant for adult maintenance or for all-life stages.