

Dog and Cat Nutrition

by Susan Moss, All The Best Pet Care

What you feed your pet each day is the single most important decision you can make regarding his or her health and well-being. The daily diet is either building good health with the proper nutrients, or damaging it through nutritional deficiencies and toxic substances.

As carnivores, dogs and cats have higher protein and fat requirements than humans that are best fulfilled by flesh foods – meat, poultry, fish and eggs. They do not thrive on plant proteins from wheat, corn, or soy, which supply an incomplete spectrum of amino acids. Moreover, raw meats and fats are far more nutritious than cooked one, retaining all the enzymes, vitamins, fatty acids, and other essential nutrients that are lost when subjected to heat and processing.

Toxins occur in the form of chemical preservatives, rejected animal by-products, tainted or unwanted cereal leftovers and non-nutritive fillers. These toxins tax the immune system and must be filtered out through your pet's organs of elimination. The better the quality of a food's raw ingredients, and the more minimal the processing, the better the health of the dogs and cat that eat them.

Our Diet Hierarchy (worst to best)

1. **Grocery Store Foods** - least cost ingredients, highly processed, no real meat, just animal by-products, grain fractions, artificial preservatives. Also found in feed and warehouse stores.
2. **"Premium" diets** - higher meat content and definitely better quality than grocery store foods, but still highly processed with animal by-products, artificial preservatives, grain fractions, fillers and flavor enhancers. Examples: **Eukanuba, IAMS & Science Diet**
3. **All-Natural "Premium" Diets** – higher meat content and no animal by-products. Only natural preservatives (Vitamins C and E, rosemary extract), and no artificial ingredients. May include some ingredients not found in human foods, like corn gluten meal, cellulose (wood fiber), or animal digests. Meats are sometimes USDA approved. Examples: **APD, Avo-Diets, Nutro, PetGuard, Precise, Sensible Choice, Wysong**
4. **Human- Quality All-Natural Diets** – least processed state-of-the-art pet foods with exclusively USDA approved ingredients, nutrient rich fruits and vegetables, antioxidants, probiotics, and lots of extra supplements. Cooked slowly with lower heat to preserved nutrients. Examples: **California Natural, Canidae, Innova (Original & Evo) , Nature's Variety, Newman's Own Organics, Organix, Pinnacle & Wellness**
5. **Unprocessed Raw Food Diets** – closest to the "evolutionary diet" – USDA meats, vegetables, ground bones and small amounts of other ingredients. Feed as a sole diet or mix with other foods. Can be home-prepared (as us for recipes), frozen, or freeze-dried. Examples: **Farmore, Natural Pet Pantry, Nature's Variety, Peppercatz, Pepperdogz, Steve's Real Food for Pets, Raw Advantage, R.O.A.R.** Beef Marrow Bones, Whole Turkey Necks, and Ground Chicken Backs. Feed alone or use as a base for a home diet.

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