



Template: Dog Food Ingredients Checklist

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Based on Article: "Dog Food Ingredients"

A practical checklist to help pet owners evaluate dog food ingredients effectively.

Checklist Items:

- ☐ **1. Read Ingredient List First**
Always check the ingredient list on dog food packages, focusing on the first few ingredients as they reflect the main composition of the food. Look for real animal proteins at the top.
Reference Section: How Dog Food Ingredients Are Listed and Regulated
- ☐ **2. Check Protein and Fat Sources**
Identify named protein sources, such as whole meats or meals. Ensure that fats are also specifically named, avoiding vague terms like 'animal fat.'
Reference Section: Core Nutrients: What Every Dog Needs
- ☐ **3. Review 'Guaranteed Analysis'**
Look at the 'Guaranteed Analysis' section to find minimum and maximum values of crude protein, fat, and fiber. This will give you a snapshot of the food's nutritional quality.
Reference Section: How Dog Food Ingredients Are Listed and Regulated
- ☐ **4. Identify Carbohydrate Sources**
Choose dog foods that contain high-quality carbohydrates, such as sweet potatoes or brown rice. Avoid foods with excessive fillers like corn gluten meal.
Reference Section: Core Nutrients: What Every Dog Needs
- ☐ **5. Decode Confusing Label Terms**
Be aware of common terms like 'human-grade,' 'by-product,' and 'natural.' Make sure to understand their meanings and implications for quality.
Reference Section: Quick decode of confusing label terms and their consumer meaning
- ☐ **6. Look for Transparency in Sourcing**
Prefer brands that provide clear sourcing information for their ingredients. Transparency about where ingredients come from can indicate higher quality.
Reference Section: Key insight: these terms are meaningful only in context
- ☐ **7. Consider Life Stage Needs**
Select food that is appropriate for your dog's life stage (e.g., puppy, adult, senior). Nutritional needs can vary significantly based on life stage.
Reference Section: Core Nutrients: What Every Dog Needs

☐ **8. Avoid Artificial Additives**

Examine the ingredient list for artificial preservatives, colors, and flavors. Aim for products that use natural alternatives.

Reference Section: Core Nutrients: What Every Dog Needs

☐ **9. Cross-check for Allergens**

Identify any known allergens for your dog and ensure they are not present in the food. Common allergens include certain grains and specific protein sources.

Reference Section: Practical takeaways readers will get from the article