



Template: Dog Food Sampling Checklist

Generated: 11/24/2025

Based on Article: "Dog Food Sampling"

A practical checklist to guide pet owners through the dog food sampling process to ensure nutritional compatibility and to identify suitable diets for their dogs.

Checklist Items:

- ☐ **1. Vet Consultation**
Book an appointment with your vet to confirm safety for your dog, especially if they are young, senior, or have health issues. Discuss any medications that may interact with the new food.
Reference Section: Preparing to Sample: What You Need Before You Start
- ☐ **2. Record Baseline Data**
Capture your dog's current weight, diet, and stool quality on a scale of 1–7 before starting the trial. This will help track changes accurately.
Reference Section: Preparing to Sample: What You Need Before You Start
- ☐ **3. Prepare Measured Sample Containers**
Use labeled containers or jars to portion out the sample food accurately. This ensures consistent serving sizes during the trial.
Reference Section: Preparing to Sample: What You Need Before You Start
- ☐ **4. Create a Feeding Schedule Template**
Develop a template or use a spreadsheet to log meal times, quantities, appetite, stool quality, and any behavioral changes throughout the sampling period.
Reference Section: Preparing to Sample: What You Need Before You Start
- ☐ **5. Start Small and Consistent**
Introduce the sample food as a meal replacement for 3–7 days while maintaining the rest of your dog's routine to isolate the effects of the new food.
Reference Section: Recognizing reactions and running a sensible sampling protocol
- ☐ **6. Monitor Baseline Metrics**
Track daily metrics such as stool quality, appetite, energy levels, and coat condition. Document any changes clearly with photographs if necessary.
Reference Section: Recognizing reactions and running a sensible sampling protocol
- ☐ **7. Escalate Observations if Needed**
If mild issues like loose stools arise, pause feeding the sample for 48 hours, then resume at half portions to observe whether symptoms recur.
Reference Section: Recognizing reactions and running a sensible sampling protocol

- ☐ **8. Stop Immediately for Severe Reactions**
If your dog exhibits severe reactions such as persistent vomiting or bloody stool, discontinue the new food immediately and contact your veterinarian.
Reference Section: Concrete indicators of an adverse reaction
- ☐ **9. Evaluate Ingredient Quality**
Research the ingredients of the sampled food, comparing with known quality standards without committing to a full bag. Consider using trial sizes to facilitate this process.
Reference Section: Why Dog Food Sampling Matters
- ☐ **10. Document and Analyze Results**
After the one-to-two-week trial, review your dog's responses to the new diet and make informed decisions on whether to transition permanently.
Reference Section: Understanding these signs and running disciplined samples prevents unnecessary diet churn