



Template: Dog Food Selection Checklist

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Based on Article: "Dog Food Selection"

A practical checklist for evaluating and selecting the right dog food based on ingredient quality and nutritional standards.

Checklist Items:

- ☐ **1. Check Primary Protein Source**
Ensure the first ingredient is a named meat (e.g., chicken, beef, salmon) rather than vague terms like 'meat meal'.
Reference Section: How to Evaluate Dog Food: A Practical Framework
- ☐ **2. Evaluate Ingredient Quality**
Look for human-grade or whole-food ingredients and avoid unnamed fillers such as 'by-products' and 'animal protein'.
Reference Section: Understanding Ingredients: What Matters and What Doesn't
- ☐ **3. Confirm Nutrient Adequacy Statement**
Verify that the packaging includes an AAFCO or NRC statement confirming the formula meets the nutritional standards for your dog's life stage.
Reference Section: How to Evaluate Dog Food: A Practical Framework
- ☐ **4. Inspect Sourcing and Manufacturing Info**
Check for transparency regarding the country of origin, facility certifications, and traceability statements to ensure consistent nutrition and safety.
Reference Section: How to Evaluate Dog Food: A Practical Framework
- ☐ **5. Conduct a Recall Check**
Perform a quick search of FDA or USDA recall pages and review the company's recall history to identify any recurring issues.
Reference Section: How to Evaluate Dog Food: A Practical Framework
- ☐ **6. Review First Three Ingredients**
Focus on the first three ingredients as they represent the bulk of the food; ensure they include high-quality protein and whole-foods.
Reference Section: Understanding Ingredients: What Matters and What Doesn't
- ☐ **7. Check Feeding Trials**
Look for indicators or statements that confirm the food has undergone feeding trials to ensure it is complete and balanced.
Reference Section: Understanding Ingredients: What Matters and What Doesn't

- ☐ **8. Use a Scoring Matrix for Comparison**
Create a side-by-side scoring matrix to rank potential dog foods across the evaluation criteria to aid decision-making.
Reference Section: [How to Evaluate Dog Food: A Practical Framework](#)
- ☐ **9. Avoid Common Fillers**
Be cautious of ingredients like corn, wheat, and generic meat terms as primary components, which are often lower in nutritional value.
Reference Section: [Understanding Ingredients: What Matters and What Doesn't](#)
- ☐ **10. Consider Your Dog's Specific Needs**
Match the chosen diet to your dog's activity level, age, and any known food sensitivities for optimal health.
Reference Section: [Article Content](#)