



Template: Homemade vs. Commercial Dog Food Checklist

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Based on Article: "Homemade vs. Commercial Dog Food: What's Best for Your Pup?"

A practical checklist to help determine the best dog food options for your pet, whether homemade or commercial.

Checklist Items:

- ☐ **1. Assess Your Dog's Nutritional Needs**
Evaluate your dog's current weight, body condition score, age, and activity level to determine specific nutritional requirements. Consult AAFCO nutrient profiles for guidance.
Reference Section: Nutritional Quality — Ingredients, Macronutrients, and Micronutrients
- ☐ **2. Consult Your Veterinarian**
Before making dietary changes, especially for senior, pregnant, or dogs with health issues, get a professional veterinary review to ensure the chosen diet is appropriate.
Reference Section: Nutritional Quality — Ingredients, Macronutrients, and Micronutrients
- ☐ **3. Research Commercial Dog Food Brands**
Identify reputable commercial dog food brands. Check for AAFCO certification, ingredient quality, and nutritional consistency to ensure balanced nutrition.
Reference Section: Commercial Dog Food Comparison
- ☐ **4. Plan Homemade Dog Food Recipes**
If opting for homemade food, utilize trusted recipes that include a balanced mix of proteins, grains, and vegetables. Make sure they meet AAFCO guidelines.
Reference Section: Nutritional Quality — Ingredients, Macronutrients, and Micronutrients
- ☐ **5. Use a Kitchen Scale for Accurate Measurements**
Employ an accurate kitchen scale to measure ingredients for homemade meals accurately, ensuring proper nutrient balance and consistency.
Reference Section: Nutritional Quality — Ingredients, Macronutrients, and Micronutrients
- ☐ **6. Practice Food Safety Measures**
Adhere to strict food safety practices like cleaning surfaces, cooking to safe temperatures, and storing food properly to prevent foodborne illness.
Reference Section: Safety, Foodborne Illness, and Preservation
- ☐ **7. Evaluate Long-Term Costs**
Compare the costs of homemade vs. commercial dog food over a few months to determine which fits your budget while meeting your dog's needs.

☐ **8. Monitor Your Dog's Health**

Regularly assess your dog's energy levels, coat condition, and overall health after changing their diet to ensure it meets their nutritional needs.

☐ **9. Consider Nutritional Supplements if Homemade**

If opting for homemade meals, only add supplements after conducting a nutritional analysis and consulting with a veterinarian.

☐ **10. Rotate Proteins and Ingredients Wisely**

If feeding homemade, consider rotating protein sources and ingredients to provide a range of nutrients but consult your vet about safe combinations.