



Nutrition

Pet food recalls are happening more and more frequently. The fact is there is no one governing the manufacture and quality of our pets' food. Pet health issues such as cancer and allergies, are increasing at an alarming rate. Poor diets also cause low or excessive energy and undesirable changes in behavior.

So, do you know what's in your dog's food? Let's face it. If it's sold in stores, if a vet recommends it, we assume it's good. But if you read the label you may be surprised. The majority of commercial dog foods are full of by-products (feet, entrails and other parts unfit for human consumption), corn, wheat, soy, sugars, and dyes. They also contain chemicals and artificial preservatives that have been banned for use in human food.

The same is true for pets as it is for humans; the less processed the food the better. There are many new "whole food" products now available for pets. These formulas contain no by-products, artificial preservatives or fillers. Many owners and vets are learning the benefits of feeding a raw diet. Convenient pre-formulated, frozen diets for dogs and cats are available.

Since, again like humans, each dog has different dietary needs, Head-to-Tail does not make any specific feeding recommendations. The best advice is to do the research and determine what will work best for you and your dog. There is a lot of interesting reading at dogfoodproject.com, onlynaturalpet.com and *Whole Dog Journal*. The owners and staff of whole food pet stores are typically very knowledgeable in this area.

Price will, of course, be an important consideration. Remember to look at the big picture when determining your pet food budget. The goal is to spend less money on supplements, medications and veterinary visits.

Finally, your decision will depend on local availability. Direct shipping is available, but shipping costs will apply. In addition consider customer service. A company that is never reachable, or has consistently late deliveries, will make the process difficult and more costly.