

What Makes A Puppy Food the Best?

By Nancy Secrist, Easdale: the best pet care

A beautiful Siberian Husky puppy came to board with us the other day. The owners had been coming for years with an older Lab who passed on and this pup had some mighty big paw prints to fill! They shared with us that even so young, the new pup was already having ear infections and medication. Why? The diet plays a key role in health and is often related to ear infections, profuse constant shedding and skin problems. Sure enough, his food's first three ingredients were: corn meal, meat and bone meal, and corn gluten....really not good for a growing puppy or any dog. To avoid a great many vet visits, choose your new puppy's food with care. Be aware of nutritional density, digestibility, and dollar cost per pound.

What is nutritional density? Puppy food should be made up of a balance of proteins, minerals, and vitamins to support growth and development without deficiencies and calories to burn for energy. How sad to think of a puppy sacrificing healthy growth when presented with a food that only provides part of what he or she needs. The size of a puppy's stomach is very limited providing another reason that the food must be nutritionally dense. Even with three feedings a day, cheap ingredients just take up too much space so that a puppy starves on a full belly.



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What is digestibility? This is a food that is so fully utilized by your puppy for growth and energy that very little is left when digestion is finished. What this means for a puppy trying to be good is that he or she can "hold it" longer with a better chance of making it outside during housebreaking training. There is far less chance of diarrhea and if this nasty occurrence occurs, it is more likely to be caused by illness or parasite rather than poor food ingredients--call your veterinarian!

What about dollar cost per pound? First, determine your price range by the pound. As a guideline, most quality foods will cost over one dollar per pound, however--there are many factors that affect price. These add to the cost of your purchase and include expensive marketing campaigns on TV or in print, end cap positioning in the store--easy to see and grab placing. If the actual food is any color other than brown, you have to wonder why dye the food? There is no dietary requirement for food dye, sugar, or chemical preservatives! My favorite pet peeve is when the brand donates a portion of the price to a pet charity--wait, your puppy has to eat poorer quality food to fund a donation?!? That makes no sense at all.

Even on a tight budget, you will find the best puppy food to be worth its price. Well nourished puppies require less food, have fewer accidents in the house, and ultimately, need fewer veterinarian visits and live longer. The so-called expensive food is much the better value!