

# THE 6 PILLARS OF CHOOSING COMMERCIAL PET FOODS

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Please use [DogFoodAdvisor.com](http://DogFoodAdvisor.com) and [WholeDogJournal.com](http://WholeDogJournal.com) to keep current on product quality. Subscribe to DogFoodAdvisor (free) To keep current on product recalls.

Choosing pet foods is possibly one of the most overwhelming decisions. Think about choosing pet food like choosing a pizza for yourself.

### **Pizza**

1. Do you want a wheat crust or white crust?
2. Do you want a gluten-free crust?
3. Do you want thin, original, New York or Chicago style?
4. Do you want tomato sauce?
5. If you want tomato sauce, do you want it flavored with basil, garlic, oregano or all three?
6. What kind of cheese do you want? Mozzarella or a mix?
7. Do you want vegetables? If so, which ones? Organic? GMO-free?
8. Do you want meat? If so, do you want pepperoni, sausage or both?
9. Do you want to buy a frozen pizza, make one at home, order one for delivery, or go to a restaurant?

You have made these nine-plus decisions confidently and automatically in the past for yourself and your household. So, let's apply the decision-making process to pet food.

### **The Six Pillars of Choosing Pet Food**

#### **1. Ingredients**

- a. What are they?
- b. Will your pet have a sensitivity reaction to any of them?

#### **2. Sourcing**

- a. Where do the ingredients come from?
- b. Are the grains, potatoes and vegetable ingredients GMO-free and organic
- c. Are the proteins grass-fed or free-range?
- d. Where do the added vitamins and minerals originate?

See my two articles "[Food Sourcing: Six tips when choosing your pet's diet](#)" and "[GMO Foods and Mycotoxins in Pet Foods](#)" for more information.

### **3. Processing** – Do you want kibble, raw or dehydrated?

See my article "[The Six Processed Forms of Dog and Cat Food](#)".

### **4. Manufacturing**

- a. Has the manufacturer had any recent recalls?
- b. What do you know about their facilities and food handling practices?
- c. Is the food made in the company's own plant or in a plant making products for many or several food companies?

See my article "[A Hush-Hush Topic: Mislabeled, undeclared, unidentified, or missing ingredients from pet foods](#)".

### **5. Additives**

- a. Are the preservatives natural or synthetic (artificial)?
- b. Does it contain artificial colors?

See my blog post "[The Cat That Ate the Kibble](#)".

### **6. Balanced**

- a. Is the food balanced for your pet?
- b. If not, will you need to supplement or worry about vitamin and mineral toxicity?

See my article "[Vitamin and Minerals – Supplementation and Overdoing It](#)".

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## **Top 10 Facts on Nutrition**

1. Nutrition is the key to a healthy immune system and resistance to disease.
2. Provide variety of whole, nutrient dense foods for health and longevity.
3. Feed species appropriate diets; needed not just to survive but thrive.
4. True food allergies rare; food intolerances common. Food elimination trials poorly followed.
5. Dogs have become obligate omnivores; genome evolved to digest and assimilate starch.
6. Cats remain obligate carnivores.
7. Raw balanced diets are superior; use common sense safety precautions.
8. Commercial raw diets should be high-pressure pasteurized; freeze dried, dehydrated or frozen.
9. Homemade balanced diets with human-grade ingredients also very good.
10. Grain-free, preferably gluten-free commercial diets are suitable too.