**How to Choose a Healthy Dog Food**

Dogs are omnivorous carnivores**.** Dogs are members of the order Carnivora, but that doesn’t make them strict carnivores, like cats. Current research indicates that dogs can eat a wide variety of foods, both animal and vegetable, and still be healthy. But dogs still have a fairly high need for protein.

**Look for high-quality proteins.** Proteins can come from both plant and animal sources. Raw or Whole chicken meat is about 20% protein, while a raw grain, like corn, is only 3% protein. So, when an ingredient like ground yellow corn is listed first on the label, it isn’t really a protein source. Try not to pick a food where protein is derived from a vegetable source. Chicken meal, essentially chicken meat with most of the water removed, is about 60% protein, and can be a good dietary source of protein in a dry food. Dehydrated meat is 94% Protein.
 **Choose nutritious carbohydrates from whole grains or vegetables.** Most dog foods also contain some carbohydrate source. Carbohydrates are necessary for making dry dog food. Corn, wheat and soy have been identified as ingredients that may provoke allergic reactions in dogs. However, veterinary nutritionists estimate that only about one in twenty itchy dogs is actually allergic to any of the ingredients found in high-quality, natural dog foods. If a dog isn’t allergic, then corn, wheat or soy are unlikely to present problems. Barley, rice, oats and potatoes are other excellent carbohydrate sources. Different carbohydrates have different glycemic indexes and should be selected based on your dog’s activity level. Pick Potatoes and Rice for quick energy or fast metabolisms and Barley and Lentils for an even burn.

Many people are surprised to learn that there is no such thing as a perfect dog food. What may work for one dog may not be right for another. Picking the right food isn't an exact science, either. Sometimes it takes a few tries to find one that works well. That's why Alaska Mill & Feed carries so many different kinds of food for dogs.

