

Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

# Whole Dog Journal™



**On page 3. So many foods, what to choose?** – You have so many food options in pet supply stores today! But having all those options can also be a little overwhelming and paralyzing, which is why we’re listing some of our favorite places to start your selection process.



©Cero Photography | Dreamstime.com

**On page 16. Anxiety relief** – Mood medication can help your dog learn.



©Photoblog | Getty Images

**On page 22. Frustrating situation** – If your dog is one of those who “blows up” when he’s on leash and sees other dogs – but is social and friendly otherwise – read this!

*In the issue*

**3**  
**WDJ’S SELECTIONS FOR THE BEST DRY DOG FOODS**

*Naming names! Our top choices for the best high-protein foods, low-fat foods, grain-free foods, products that represent the best value, and more.*

**6**  
**APPROVED FOODS FOR 2023**

*Information about the offerings of 63 companies, representing more than 1,100 worthy dry dog foods, for your consideration.*

**14**  
**DON’T BRING YOUR DOG!**

*Many of us like to bring our dogs wherever we go. But every scenario isn’t right for every dog, and he might be happier – and safer – if you leave him at home.*

**16**  
**MEDICATIONS FOR CHRONIC CANINE ANXIETY**

*An overview of the drug options, cautions, and contraindications to discuss with your veterinarian.*

**20**  
**IN NEED OF THERAPY**

*Do you and your dog absolutely love people? If so, consider training your canine companion to be a therapy dog!*

**22**  
**ON-LEASH AGGRESSION**

*It’s not uncommon for dogs to behave badly when they are leashed and see other dogs. Here are the leading reasons for this – and what you can do to improve these responses.*

\$5.95US



**Like us!**  
facebook.com/  
wholedogjournal



**Find us!**  
online at  
wholedogjournal.com



**Check us out!**  
instagram.com/dogs  
ofwholedogjournal

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Nancy Kerns

**TRAINING EDITOR**

Pat Miller

**PUBLISHER**

Timothy H. Cole

**CIRCULATION DIRECTOR**

Greg King

**EDITORIAL OFFICE**

WDJEditor@gmail.com  
4006 Hildale Avenue  
Oroville, CA 95966

**SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES**

(800) 829-9165  
Whole-Dog-Journal.com/cs  
PO Box 8535  
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535

**REPRINTS**

For price quote,  
email Jennifer Jimolka at  
JJimolka@belvoir.com  
Minimum order 1,000

**NEWSSTAND**

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

**WHOLE DOG JOURNAL DOES NOT  
ACCEPT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING**

**B** *Whole Dog Journal* (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 535 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Chief Content Officer; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Chief Marketing Officer; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Chief Circulation Officer. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2023, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

*Whole Dog Journal* makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional.

*Whole Dog Journal* does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to  
*Whole Dog Journal*,  
PO Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535



# Naming Names

*This year, we're not just telling you how we select the best dog foods, we're identifying some of our top picks.*

For years, I've told you what attributes to look for (and look out for) when choosing a food for your dogs. This often leads people to ask me what companies or products I like best, or what I feed *my* dogs. I've always declined to answer, because what's right for *my* dogs (and time and budget), may not suit you or your dogs at all. But to heck with it: This year, I'm naming names – not the names



of what I feed, but what foods and companies I admire the most, and what products I would point you toward if I accompanied you to the pet supply store. Of course, you have to select what works best for *your* dogs – just like us, they can't all eat the same thing and still thrive – but I hope it helps you understand how I use WDJ's food selection criteria to narrow down the abundant options.

Speaking of the wealth of options: There are more than 1,100 good dog foods represented on our list of "Approved Dry Dog Foods for 2023," which starts on page 6. This is a far cry from the couple-dozen products that met the same selection criteria when WDJ was launched 26 years ago. It's a *great* thing to have so many healthy options today, even if it can be overwhelming.

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:** When I first read trainer Kathy Callahan's article on page 14 ("Leave Your Dog Home!"), I immediately thought of something that happened shortly after I graduated from high school. My parents once threw a big country barbecue party. There was an entire pig cooking in a pit in a firepit, a band playing in a tent in the pasture, and hundreds of people all over the property. At the time, I had a Kelpie-mix named Tavi, who had the run of the place thanks to his training and usual good behavior. But late in the afternoon, I heard a bunch of people yelling and the unmistakable sound of a dog fight. I ran straight for the ruckus, where three or four people, including a family friend who was a professional musician, were trying to separate the combatants: Tavi and our next-door neighbor's dog, who had gotten into our pasture somehow. In the melee, my musician friend got bitten – a redirected snap that punctured the back of his hand. This not only led to a trip to the emergency room, but several return visits to a doctor, because the bite (which got infected) damaged a nerve in my friend's hand, and left him unable to play the guitar for about a *year*.

Talk about guilt; I feel terrible about it to this day. Why hadn't I locked up my dog for the party? The answer is partly that I was young and dumb and confident in my dog's *training* – but the real answer is that I had never heard of trigger-stacking. Read Kathy's article, and avoid my mistake!

NK



# What's the Best Dog Food?

*Understand what attributes qualify a dry dog food as “high-quality” – and which traits should disqualify a product from your consideration. Then, search with your dog’s unique needs in mind.*

When asked, “What’s the best dog food?” our first question is, “Best for *whom*, exactly?” Are you feeding an overweight, sedentary dog? A Dachshund puppy? A mixed-breed puppy with enormous feet? An adolescent Border Collie agility star? A white Boxer with allergies? Four medium- to large-breed rescue dogs?

The point is, the “best food” is not likely the same for any of these dogs! An owner first needs to take into account all of a dog’s individual needs:

✓ Dog’s age (puppies need products that are formulated for puppies or “dogs of all life stages”).

✓ Dog’s size (small dogs need a smaller kibble size).

✓ Dog’s fitness and activity level (overweight and inactive dogs need lower-fat foods; dogs who are highly active or too thin need more fat *and* more protein).

✓ Dog’s ability to tolerate and digest ingredients (careful label review is needed for dogs who are allergic to or intolerant of certain ingredients).

✓ Your ability to afford the food.

## FOOD SELECTION TENETS

With your dog’s specific needs in mind, we recommend searching among the products on our list of “Approved Foods for 2023” (starting on page 6), all of which have met our food selection criteria (outlined on page 5). We’d also like to recommend the use of our search tool (online at [whole-dog-journal.com/WDJ-searchable-dry-dog-food-database](http://whole-dog-journal.com/WDJ-searchable-dry-dog-food-database)),

which allows you to search our list of more than 1,100 foods and add as many filters as you want to find the most appropriate candidates for your dog. Looking for a higher-protein, lower-fat food without chicken or peas? Add the filters and search!

We’d recommend keeping a few keys in mind, however – tenets that guided our own “Best Food” selections in the categories below:

■ Unless your dog has very special needs, don’t pick one food and feed only that food forever. Switch often for nutritional “balance over time.”

■ Watch your dog! Keep track of any adverse reactions, and write down the details (maker, protein and fat levels, ingredients). Let your dog’s response guide your future purchases.

■ Unless your dog has a specific requirement necessitating it, avoid “extreme” foods, such as those with the absolute highest or lowest protein or fat, six different legumes or grains, novel proteins (alligator, brushtail, kangaroo?!), or 10 different animal species. Most dogs’ needs – and our selections below – fall in the middle ground.

### Best Adult Maintenance Food

#### Nulo MedalSeries Ancient Grains Adult Beef, Barley & Lamb



Things we like:

- ✓ Deboned meat (1st and 9th on the ingredients list) and two meat meals (2nd, 3rd)
- ✓ Nice use (not overwhelming amount) of “ancient grains”
- ✓ Extraordinary amount of probiotics listed on the guaranteed analysis

**First 10 ingredients:** Deboned beef, turkey meal, chicken meal, barley, oats, spelt, chicken fat, ground flaxseed, deboned lamb, millet

**Protein:** Min 28%  
**Fat:** 16%  
**Calories:** 425 Kcal/cup  
**Cost:** \$3.12/lb

Runners up:

- Wellness CORE Digestive Health
- Only Natural Pet Raw Blends Digestive Care Ancient Grains
- Merrick Full Source With Healthy Grains Raw Coated Kibble Salmon & Whitefish

### Best Puppy Food

#### Instinct Be Natural Chicken & Brown Rice For Puppies



Things we like:

- ✓ Meat (1st) and two meat meals (2nd, 6th)
- ✓ Amount of DHA (important for puppy development) on the guaranteed analysis
- ✓ Freeze-dried, raw coated kibble ensures palatability

**First 10 ingredients:** Chicken, chicken meal, barley, brown rice, oatmeal, menhaden fish meal, chicken fat, ground flaxseed, lamb meal, salmon oil

**Protein:** Min 25%  
**Fat:** 18%  
**Calories:** 468 Kcal/cup  
**Cost:** \$2.59/lb

Runners up:

- Dr. Gary’s Best Breed Puppy Recipe
- Chicken Soup Classic Large Breed Puppy Food
- NutriSource Small & Medium Breed Puppy

## Best Limited Ingredient Food

### Lucy Pet Chicken, Brown Rice & Pumpkin Limited Ingredient Formula



#### Things we like:

- ✓ Taurine listed on the guaranteed analysis
- ✓ A blend of fiber sources (brown rice, pumpkin, flaxseed, dried kelp, dried chicory root, beet pulp, and ground miscanthus grass) supports gut bacteria
- ✓ Made in company's own plant

**First 10 ingredients:** Chicken, chicken meal, brown rice, oatmeal, chicken fat, pumpkin, dried beet pulp, ground miscanthus grass, natural flavor, flaxseeds

**Protein:** Min 24%

**Fat:** 16%

**Calories:** 380 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$2.63/lb

#### Runners up:

- I And Love And You Naked Essentials Ancient Grains Recipe with Beef & Lamb
- Earthborn Holistic Unrefined Smoked Turkey

## Best Budget Food

### Evolve Classic Deboned Lamb & Brown Rice Recipe



#### Things we like:

- ✓ Ingredients include meat (1st) and two meat meals (2nd, 3rd) before carb sources
- ✓ Added taurine
- ✓ Manufacturer sources ingredients and formulates and manufactures the food in its own Safe Quality Food (SQF) -certified plant

**First 10 ingredients:** Deboned lamb, turkey meal, chicken meal, ground brown rice, barley, oat groats, rice bran, chicken fat, dried plain beet pulp, natural chicken flavor

**Protein:** Min 24%

**Fat:** 12%

**Calories:** 347 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$1.73/lb

#### Runners up:

- Triumph Wild Spirit Chicken & Brown Rice Recipe (\$1.80/lb)
- Health Extension Chicken & Brown Rice Recipe (\$1.97/lb)

## Best Lower-Fat Food

### Wellness Complete Health Healthy Weight



#### Things we like:

- ✓ Meat first, meat meal second
- ✓ Inclusion of legume (peas) in minor but supportive role (6th)
- ✓ Complete nutrient profile available on Wellness website
- ✓ Extra nutrients listed on the guaranteed analysis, including microorganisms (probiotics) and taurine

**First 10 ingredients:** Deboned chicken, chicken meal, oatmeal, ground brown rice, ground barley, peas, tomato pomace, rice, ground flaxseed, tomatoes

**Protein:** Min 24%

**Fat:** 10%

**Calories:** 405 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$2.43/lb

#### Runners up:

- Fromm Reduced Activity & Senior Gold (Min 11% fat)
- Lotus Chicken Senior Recipe (Min 9% fat)

## Best High Protein Food

### Orijen Amazing Grains Original Recipe



#### Things we like:

- ✓ Five meats (1st-5th) are followed by two dehydrated meats (6th-7th) before grains appear on ingredients; no meat meals
- ✓ Amounts of DHA, EPA, taurine, and probiotics on the guaranteed analysis
- ✓ Orijen is made in Champion's own manufacturing plants

**First 10 ingredients:** Chicken, turkey, chicken liver, whole herring, whole mackerel, dehydrated chicken, dehydrated chicken liver, oat groats, millet, chicken fat

**Protein:** Min 38%

**Fat:** 18%

**Calories:** 490 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$4.30/lb

#### Runners up:

- Only Natural Pet Raw Blends Skin & Coat Recipe (38% protein)
- Wellness Core RawRev with Whole-some Grains Turkey (38% protein)

## Best Grain-Free Food

### Stella & Chewy's Wild Red Raw Blend Grain & Legume Free Red Meat Recipe



#### Things we like:

- ✓ No reliance on (and typical over-representation of) legumes to replace grain
- ✓ Amounts of taurine and probiotics on the guaranteed analysis
- ✓ Freeze-dried raw coating on kibble, plus chunks of freeze-dried meat

**First 10 ingredients:** Beef, pork, pork meal, sweet potato, tapioca, beef liver, natural pork flavor, pork fat, lamb meal, ground flaxseed

**Protein:** Min 36%

**Fat:** 17.5%

**Calories:** 420 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$3.80/lb

#### Runners up:

- Farmina N&D Prime Chicken & Pomegranate Adult
- Castor & Pollux Pristine Grain-Free Grass-Fed Beef & Sweet Potato Recipe with Raw Bites

## Best Alternative Proteins Food

### Freely Vegetarian Recipe



#### Things we like:

- ✓ Eggs used as primary protein source
- ✓ Very limited number of ingredients (can be helpful for dogs with multiple food allergies/intolerances)
- ✓ Taurine listed on the guaranteed analysis

**First 10 ingredients:** Eggs, brown rice, oat groats, pearled barley, millet, quinoa, sunflower oil, dicalcium phosphate, natural flavor, calcium carbonate

**Protein:** Min 23%

**Fat:** 16%

**Calories:** 364 Kcal/cup

**Cost:** \$5.99/lb

#### Runners up:

- Jiminy's Cravin' Cricket Dog Food
- Open Farm Kind Earth Premium Insect Kibble Recipe

## WDJ'S DRY DOG FOOD SELECTION CRITERIA

In order to appear on our "approved dry dog foods" list (which begins on the next page), a company's products must exhibit the following hallmarks of quality pet foods and contain few or none of the undesirable traits listed below.

### HALLMARKS OF QUALITY

✓ **Named animal protein sources at the top of the ingredients list.** Ingredients in pet food are listed in order of the weight of that ingredient in the formula, so you want to see a named animal protein or named animal protein meal first on the ingredients list. ("Named" means the species is identified: chicken, beef, lamb, etc. "Meal" means a dry, rendered product made from an identified species.)

✓ **Meat supported by meat meal.** When a fresh meat is first on the ingredient list, there should be a named animal-protein meal immediately or closely following the meat. Fresh or frozen meat contains a lot of moisture (which is heavy), but because of the moisture, its protein content is reduced, so if meat is first on the list, it acts like a diluted protein source. While it adds an appealing flavor and aroma to the food, it doesn't contribute as much protein as a freeze-dried or dehydrated meat or a meat meal. That's why we like to see another named source of animal protein appearing in the top two or three ingredients.

What's best: meat only, meat meal only, or both? It depends on what works best for your dog and your budget; we just want you to be aware of the difference. Some companies use fresh meats supported by plant proteins; generally speaking, plant proteins are less appropriate for dogs than animal proteins, which offer the ideal amino acid profile required by canines.

✓ **Whole foods.** When vegetables, fruits, grains, and/or carbohydrate sources such as chickpeas or sweet potatoes are used, they should be whole. Ingredients that have already been processed, shipped, and stored before they are used in pet food will have lost quite a bit of their nutritive value before they are mixed with other ingredients and processed again (mixed with other ingredients and then either baked or extruded, dried, and coated).

✓ **Ingredients that are certified as organic, humanely raised, or sustainably farmed.** Companies will use wiggly words to lend the impression that they are using the best ingredients available. Certifications give these claims credibility.

### LOOK OUT FOR THESE UNDESIRABLE TRAITS

Here are some things to *look out for* – undesirable attributes that indicate a lower-quality food:

✗ **Animal products that are not specified by species.** Meat meal, meat and bone meal, poultry meal, poultry by-product meal, animal fat, poultry fat: It's bad enough that the origin of these ingredients is untraceable, but if your dog is intolerant of or allergic to certain ingredients, you *have* to know what you're feeding him.

✗ **Animal by-products.** This includes meat by-products and poultry by-products, as well as meat by-product meal and poultry by-product meal. These animal protein sources are nutritious, but they are handled with far less care than more expensive animal protein sources (i.e., usually without refrigeration and with less sanitation).

✗ **Ingredient splitting.** This is where two or more very similar food "fractions" appear on the ingredients list. Because the ingredients are listed in descending order of their weight, a manufacturer can make it appear that a high-quality ingredient is represented in the food in a greater amount than it is. If all the iterations of an ingredient (to use a common example, brown rice, white rice, brewers rice) were combined or reconstituted, they would outweigh and push the higher-quality ingredient down on the ingredients list.

✗ **Added sweeteners.** Sweeteners are sometimes used in low-quality foods to increase their palatability, especially in carbohydrate-heavy foods with low meat inclusions.

✗ **Artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives** (such as BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin). The color of the food doesn't matter to your dog. And it should be flavored well enough with healthy meats and fats to be enticing. Natural preservatives, such as mixed tocopherols, can be used instead.

## Approved Foods

*On the following pages, you'll find a list of pet food companies that make foods that meet our selection criteria. For each company, we've listed how many varieties they make (grain-free and grain-containing); how many are formulated for "adult maintenance" and for dogs of all life stages; how many varieties are made with meat only, meat and meat meal, meat meal only, and vegetarian diets; and what range of minimum protein and fat levels are offered by each company's products.*

*You should notice that even among these better- and best-quality products, there is quite a wide price range. All of the products made by these companies are better than most of the products on the market. But some companies take food production to an art form, with certified humanely raised meats, organic ingredients, functional ingredients such as glucosamine, prebiotics, and probiotics, etc.*

*What's most important is that you find products at the price point that you can afford and that suit your dog. To that end, we've included the price range of each manufacturer's offerings, expressed by average price per pound. This was calculated using the largest size bag available for each variety (foods are always more expensive when sold in small bags).*

*Using the steps described on the previous pages, choose some foods that are new to you and your dog and give them a try! If your local pet supply store doesn't carry a product you're interested in, ask if they can order it, or try online. If a product really works for your dog, ask the local store manager if they can carry it for you.*

*And don't forget: One-size-fits-all recommendations don't work when it comes to diet. You have to feed each individual dog what works for him. It's wonderful when you have more than one dog and they can both digest and thrive on the same variety of food, but we wouldn't take it for granted that any two dogs can.*

# WHOLE DOG JOURNAL'S APPROVED DRY DOG FOODS FOR 2023

Products appear alphabetically by best-known name. In some cases, this is synonymous with the name of the company; in others, it's the name of the food line. WDJ Editor Nancy Kerns has toured the manufacturing facilities of the foods that appear in **RED**.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>ACANA</b> • (Champion) • Edmonton, AB • (877) 939-0006 • acana.com/en_CA • acana.com/en_US					
Can \$3.42 U.S. \$3.30	Can: 23, 16 GF U.S.: 21, 14 GF	Can: 15 ALS, 8 AM U.S.: 20 ALS, 1 AM	Can: 7 Meat, 16 Both U.S.: 21 Both	Can: 27% - 35% P, 11% - 22% F U.S.: 27% - 33% P, 10% - 19% F	Canada: The foods made in the Edmonton, Alberta, facility are sold in Canada and internationally. <b>Healthy Grains</b> foods contain fresh and dehydrated meats, and use oats, sorghum, and millet as carb sources. <b>Acana Singles</b> foods also use fresh and dehydrated meats (but from only one animal species each) and chickpeas and lentils as carbs. The other Acana foods contain meats, meat meals, and lentils, peas, and chickpeas. Foods made in the Auburn, Kentucky, facility are sold only in the U.S. These Acana foods contain meat and meat meals (no dehydrated meats). <b>Acana Singles</b> use meats from only one animal species and sweet potatoes, chickpeas and lentils as carbs. The remaining Acana foods use combinations of oats, peas, lentils, sorghum, millet, pinto beans, chickpeas, and sweet potatoes as carbs.
<b>ADDITION FOODS</b> • Kent, WA • (425) 251-0330 • additionfoods.com					
\$3.17	11, 10GF	9 ALS, 2 AM	1 Meal, 9 Both, 1 Veg	20% - 40% P 9%, - 15% F	Addiction foods are made in New Zealand. Its new <b>Wild Islands</b> foods have ultra-high protein and low carb levels; they use fava beans, peas, and tapioca as carb sources. Its other foods use salmon, kangaroo, and free-range lamb and venison meat and meat meals. Carb sources include potatoes, peas, and tapioca.
<b>ANNAMAET</b> • Hatfield, PA • (888) 723-0367 • annamaet.com					
\$3.56	16, 7 GF	14 ALS, 2 AM	12 Meal, 4 Both	23% - 33% P 7%, - 20% F	All but four of Annamaet's formulas are made with meat meals made from low-ash chicken, salmon, lamb, turkey, or whitefish. The four foods that also contain fresh meat contain cod, lamb, or carp. Grain-free varieties use various combinations of sweet potatoes, peas, tapioca, lentils, chickpeas, and potatoes as carbs. Grain-containing formulas use millet, brown rice, oats, and/or barley. The company uses certified sustainable fish sources and marine microalgae as a sustainable form of omega 3 fatty acids.
<b>ARTEMIS</b> • La Habra, CA • (800) 282-5876 • artemiscompany.com					
\$2.63	6, 3 GF	3 ALS, 3 AM	6 Both	20% - 28% P, 10% - 17% F	Artemis offers two lines. <b>Fresh Mix</b> (three varieties) is its original line; these contain chicken, turkey, and chicken meal and use brown rice, peas, barley, and/or oatmeal as carbs. <b>Osopure</b> foods (three varieties) are grain-free; they use garbanzo beans, peas, and lentils as carbs. Each Osopure variety contains meat and meat meal from a single animal species (turkey, salmon, or duck).
<b>AVODERM</b> • (Breeder's Choice) • Irwindale, CA • (866) 500-6286 • avodermnatural.com					
\$3.06	21, 12 GF	10 ALS, 11 AM	11 Meal, 10 Both	20% - 30% P 8%, - 24% F	All Avoderm's foods contain avocado. Its grain-free foods use peas, tapioca, and garbanzo beans as carbs; its grain-containing foods use brown rice, white rice, and oatmeal. Pumpkin appears in some varieties. The <b>Advanced</b> foods use meat meal or meat and meat meal from a single animal species. Breeder's Choice makes its own foods at its southern California manufacturing plant.
<b>BIXBI</b> • Boulder, CO • (303) 666-1070 • bixbipet.com					
\$4.16	15, 13 GF	15 ALS	15 Meat	24% - 30% P, 15% - 18% F	No Bixbi food contains meat meal; only fresh meats are used. <b>Liberty</b> foods (10 varieties) contain one or more of beef, chicken, trout, lamb, turkey, goat, quail, duck – and all of these meats except for trout are deboned (i.e., low-ash). Grain-free varieties use lentils and peas; the two varieties with grain use sorghum and oats. <b>Rawbble</b> foods (five varieties) are all grain-free; they use peas and lentils as carb sources. Each contains only one animal species (deboned chicken, deboned duck, deboned lamb, deboned pork, or turkey). Each Rawbble food is freeze-dry raw-coated.
<b>BLACKWOOD</b> • (BrightPet Nutrition) • Lisbon, OH • (888) 843-1738 • blackwoodpetfood.com					
\$2.39	13, 3 GF	10 ALS, 3 AM	13 Meal	20.5% - 28% P, 6.5% - 18% F	The <b>Blackwood Solutions</b> foods (sensitive skin, sensitive stomach, etc.) are grain-free; they use peas, chickpeas, tapioca, and lentils as carbs. <b>Everyday Diet</b> foods contain grain: some combination of brown rice, millet, sorghum, oats, and barley. Corn appears (second!) on the ingredients list of two varieties. BrightPet Nutrition Group owns and operates its own manufacturing plants.
<b>BORÉAL</b> • Beamsville, ON • (800) 253-8128 • borealpetfood.com					
\$3.36	20, 9 GF	NA, NA	10 Meal, 10 Both	24% - 32% P, 12% - 18% F	<b>Original</b> foods (four varieties) are grain-free (peas and northern white pea beans are used) and contain meat and meat meal. <b>Proper</b> foods (four varieties) use meat meals (a single animal species in each), peas and pea beans, and barley, rice, and/or oats. <b>Vital</b> (four varieties) are grain-free; they use peas, pea beans, and lentils and a single animal species meat meal. <b>Healthy Grains</b> (four varieties) contain barley, brown rice, oats and no legumes; each contains a meat and a meat meal.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>CANIDAE</b> • Stamford, CT • (800) 398-1600 • canidae.com					
\$2.57	44, 18 GF	5 ALS, 39 AM	7 Meal, 36 Both, 1 Veg	22% - 35% P 7% - 20% F	<b>Sustain</b> foods (three varieties, one vegetarian) contain “responsibly sourced proteins.” <b>CA</b> foods (six) contain meat, meat meal, and peas, oatmeal, sorghum, barley, millet, and/or brown rice. <b>Pure</b> foods (19, 14 grain-free) are limited-ingredient. The grain-free varieties use lentils, sweet potatoes, garbanzo beans, peas, and/or potatoes; grain-containing foods use oatmeal, barley, sorghum, and/or millet. <b>All Life Stages</b> foods (five) are made with meat meal, brown rice, oatmeal, barley, and sorghum, and peas and lentils. <b>Under the Sun</b> foods (three grain-free) are made with meat meal, peas and beans as carbs. <b>Goodness</b> foods (eight) contain rice, barley, sorghum, oatmeal, and/or millet; six varieties contain meat and meat meal; two use only meat meal.
<b>CARNA4</b> • Toronto, ON • (855) 422-7624 • carna4.com					
\$11.79	6, 5 GF	6 ALS	6 Meat	29% P 15% F	These are highly unique foods – and not just because they are baked, rather than extruded. Five are made with meat and liver from a single animal species, one to three species of fish, and organic sprouted seeds. The last one is similar, only it uses duck with pork liver. No vitamin/mineral supplements have been added; all nutrition is from the food ingredients.
<b>CASTOR &amp; POLLUX</b> • Amarillo, TX • (800) 875-7518 • castorpolluxpet.com					
\$5.67	13, 8 GF	2 ALS, 11 AM	13 Both	26% - 33% P 13% - 16% F	All six <b>Organix</b> varieties are certified organic. The first ingredient of each is organic chicken; next is organic chicken meal. Three varieties are grain-free; these use sweet potatoes, potatoes, peas, and tapioca (all organic). The grain-containing varieties use oatmeal, barley, brown rice, and peas (all organic). All seven <b>Pristine</b> varieties contain either grass-fed beef or lamb, wild-caught fish, or free-range turkey or chicken; in each case, a meat is the first ingredient, followed by a meat meal. The two grain-containing varieties use oatmeal, brown rice, and barley (all organic). The grain-free varieties use sweet potatoes, potatoes, tapioca, peas, and/or lentils.
<b>CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL</b> • Cos Cob, CT • (800) 658-0624 • chickensouppets.com					
\$2.63	15, 4 GF	6 ALS, 9 AM	15 Both	21% - 30% P 6% - 18% F	All the Chicken Soup foods but one (Weight Control variety) have a meat first and a meat meal second on the ingredients list. <b>Classic</b> varieties (11) contain grain (barley, rice, oatmeal, and/or millet); some also contain peas and faba beans. Grain-free varieties (four) use peas, lentils, faba beans, and/or sweet potatoes as carb sources.
<b>DOGSWELL</b> • Chesterfield, MO • (888) 559-8833 • dogswell.com					
\$2.75	4, 2 GF	4 AM	4 Both	30% P 16% - 18% F	Dogswell makes four “solutions-based foods” (hip & joint, skin & coat, digestive health). Each starts its ingredients list with a meat followed by a meat meal. The two grain-free varieties use peas, chickpeas, lentils, and/or sweet potatoes as carbs. The two grain-containing varieties use brown rice, oats, and/or barley and peas and/or chickpeas.
<b>DR. GARY'S BEST BREED</b> • Findlay, OH • (800) 500-5999 • bestbreed.com					
\$2.25	18, 3 GF	17 ALS, 1 AM	18 Meal	21% - 32% P 7% - 22% F	All of Dr. Gary's foods have a meat meal as the first ingredient; some contain an additional meat meal or fish meal. The three grain-free varieties use lentils, peas, and chickpeas as carbs. The other 15 foods do not contain legumes; they use some combination of brown rice, barley, millet, oatmeal, and sorghum as carbs. Six varieties are formulated with specific breeds or types in mind; one high-calorie, high-fat variety is for working dogs, nursing mothers, highly active dogs, etc.).
<b>DR. TIM'S PET FOOD</b> • Marquette, MI • (906) 249-8486 • drtims.com					
\$3.21	11, 3 GF	8 ALS, 3 AM	9 Meal, 2 Both	26% - 35% P 8% - 25% F	Dr. Tim's offers three grain-free varieties; these use potatoes, peas, tapioca, and/or garbanzo beans as carbs. Most of the rest (eight varieties) use brown rice, barley, and oats; one uses millet, quinoa, and spelt. Most have a meat meal as the first ingredient; one starts with a fish and one starts with liver. All of Dr. Tim's foods contain dried porcine plasma and added taurine.
<b>EAGLE PACK</b> • (Wellness Pet) • Tewksbury, MA • (800) 225-0904 • eaglepack.com					
\$2.26	7	3 ALS, 4 AM	7 Meal	23% - 30% P 6% - 19% F	Each variety has one or two meat meals (chicken meal, lamb meal, and/or pork meal) at the top of the ingredients list and contains whole grains (brown rice, barley, oatmeal). Four varieties contain peas; otherwise, no other legumes. These foods are made in Wellness's own manufacturing facility.
<b>EARTHBOEN HOLISTIC</b> • (Midwestern Pet Foods) • Evansville, IN • (812) 867-7466 • earthbornholisticpetfood.com					
\$2.82	21, 11GF	13 ALS, 8 AM	14 Meal, 7 Both	23% - 32% P 7% - 18% F	<b>Earthborn Holistic</b> foods (11 varieties, five grain-free) contain meat meal only. Grain-free varieties use peas, tapioca, chickpeas, pumpkin, and/or sweet potato; pea-free foods (eight) use brown rice, pumpkin, barley, oatmeal, tapioca, buckwheat, and/or sweet potato. <b>Venture</b> line (6 varieties) is free of grains and legumes, using pumpkin, butternut squash, and/or tapioca. Three of these recipes use meat only; the other three use meat and meat meal. <b>Unrefined</b> line (4 varieties) uses quinoa, buckwheat, oatmeal, barley, pumpkin, and/or butternut squash.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>EVANGER'S</b> • Markham, IL • (847) 537-0102 • evangersdogfood.com					
\$2.39	5, 3 GF	5 ALS	3 Meal, 2 Both	24% - 33% P 6% - 15% F	Evanger's three grain-free varieties use sweet potatoes, lentils, potatoes, and/or pumpkin as carbs. The grain-containing foods use sweet potatoes, lentils, brown rice, barley, and/or oatmeal. Three varieties contain meat meal only; two use meat and meat meal. Evanger's dry dog foods are made by an independent contract manufacturer.
<b>EVOLVE</b> • Red Bay, AL • (800) 705-2111 • evolvepetfood.com					
\$2.37	12, 8 GF	9 ALS, 3 AM	Both	20% - 35% P 10% - 18% F	All Evolve foods contain meat and meat meals, with meat as the first ingredient in all formulas, and with the exception of the two Simply Six foods, the meats are deboned. The <b>Classic</b> line (three varieties) use brown rice, barley, and oats as carbs. The <b>Grain Free</b> line (five varieties) use tapioca, sweet potatoes, garbanzo beans, and peas as carbs. <b>Simply Six</b> limited-ingredient foods (two varieties) use brown rice, barley, and oats (no legumes) as carbs. <b>Small Batch Baked</b> foods (two varieties) are baked and grain-free; they use sweet potatoes, tapioca, peas, and/or chickpeas. Foods are made in Evolve's own plant.
<b>FARMINA</b> • New York, NY • (888) 292-9965 • farmina.com/us					
\$4.77	58, 42 GF	14 ALS, 44 AM	58 Meat	23% - 36% P 8% - 22% F	All Farmina foods are made with fresh and dehydrated meats (no meat meals). <b>Ancestral Grain</b> foods (13 varieties) use spelt and oats for carbs. <b>Ocean</b> foods (11 varieties) all contain fish and use sweet potatoes and pea fiber. <b>Prime</b> line (eight varieties) are grain-free, using sweet potatoes and pea fiber as carbs. <b>Pumpkin</b> line (12 varieties) are grain-free, using pea starch, dried pumpkin, and pea fiber for carbs. <b>Quinoa</b> line (14 varieties) are grain-free, "solutions" foods (skin, digestion, etc.). These use pea starch and quinoa as carbs.
<b>FIRSTMATE</b> • North Vancouver, BC • (800) 658-1166 • firstmate.com					
\$3.01	19, 13 GF	18 ALS, 1 AM	19 Meal	18% - 32% P 8% - 20% F	Most <b>FirstMate</b> foods (15 varieties) contain a single species of meat meal. "Grain-Friendly" foods use oatmeal and brown rice, and no potatoes or legumes. Grain-free foods use potatoes and pumpkin as carbs. The grain-free <b>Kasiks</b> line (three varieties) contain a single species meat meal and chickpeas, lentils (two kinds), and peas (two kinds). <b>Skoki</b> (one variety) is the company's economy food, made with three meat meals, oatmeal, and rice. Family-owned and -operated, FirstMate makes its own foods in British Columbia.
<b>FREELY</b> • St. Louis, MO • (833) 918-1236 • freelypet.com					
\$4.79	11, 5 GF	10 ALS, 1 AM	10 Both, 1 Egg/Veg	23% - 28% P 14% - 17% F	Nine of Freely's foods have a meat and a meat meal as the first and second ingredients; the exceptions are the "Flexitarian" variety (which has brown rice first and eggs second, as well as turkey and turkey meal) and the "Vegetarian" variety, which uses eggs as the sole animal protein source, and brown rice, oats, barley, millet, and quinoa as carbs. Freely's five grain-free varieties contain sweet potatoes, peas, and lentils. The grain-containing foods use brown rice, oat groats, barley, and millet. Freely offers dog owners access to certified small animal nutritionists through its website's "Nutrition Center."
<b>FROMM</b> • Mequon, WI • (800) 325-6331 • frommfamily.com					
\$3.21	34, 14 GF	28 ALS, 6 AM	34 Both	21% - 30% P 10% - 18% F	All Fromm foods contain meat as a first ingredient, and meat meals in supportive roles. <b>Classic</b> foods (three varieties) are "life-stage" foods (puppy, adult, mature adult) with whole grains (barley, oatmeal, brown rice, and white rice) and no legumes. About half of the 17 varieties of the <b>Four Star</b> foods are grain-free and use lentils, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and/or chickpeas as carbs. The grain-containing foods use various combinations of oats, barley, sweet potatoes, brown rice, white rice, potatoes, and pumpkin as carbs. The <b>Gold</b> line (nine varieties) are also life-stage foods; they use oat groats, barley, brown rice, white rice, oats, millet, and/or potatoes as carbs. The <b>Heartland Gold</b> foods (four varieties) all use beef as a first ingredient, followed by pork meat and bone meal, and peas, lentils, chickpeas, and potatoes. A grain-free weight-management variety uses lentils, peas, chickpeas, potatoes, and sweet potatoes as carbs. Fromm's foods are made in their own manufacturing facility.
<b>GRANDMA MAE'S</b> • Newark, DE • (888) 653-8021 • grandmamaes.com					
\$3.79	18, 10 GF	15 ALS, 3 AM	18 Meal	23% - 32% P 5.5% - 16% F	All of Grandma Mae's foods are made with a meat meal as the first ingredient. The 10 grain-free varieties contain chickpeas, lentils, peas, tapioca, sweet potatoes, and/or fava beans. The grain-containing foods are made with brown rice, oats, sweet potato, millet, and/or barley. All foods are formulated with extra methionine. Products are manufactured in an EU-certified plant. This company also utilizes a "test and hold" program.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>HALO</b> • Tampa, FL • (800) 426-4256 • halopets.com					
\$5.21	18, 7 GF	3 ALS, 15 AM	2 Meat, 15 Both, 1 Veg	25% - 33% P 12% - 20% F	Some major changes are seen in Halo recipes this year. All of the <b>Elevate</b> foods (14 varieties) have a deboned meat as their first ingredient, but meat meals are now included in the formulas, too. Oats, barley, tapioca, and quinoa are used as carbs in the grain-containing foods; sweet potatoes, potatoes, tapioca, and pumpkin are the carbs in the grain-free varieties. The <b>Holistic</b> line (four varieties) still contain no meat meal. These include one vegan variety, one with cage-free chicken, one with cage-free turkey, and one with wild-caught fish from certified sustainable fisheries; the three that contain meat also contain soy protein concentrate. The turkey variety is grain-free and contains peas, chickpeas, lentils, and sweet potatoes; the grain-containing varieties use oats and barley as well as peas and chickpeas.
<b>HEALTH EXTENSION</b> • Hauppauge, NY • (800) 992-9738 • healthextension.com <sup>1</sup>					
\$3.04	12, 6 GF	9 ALS, 3 AM	12 Both	24% - 27% P 7.5% - 18% F	All Health Extension foods contain meat (many of them organic) and meat meals; deboned meats always appear first on label. The six grain-free varieties contain some combination of chickpeas, lentils, sweet potatoes, potatoes, pumpkin, and peas as carbs. The grain-containing varieties use brown rice, oatmeal, barley quinoa, sweet potatoes, and/or peas. Family-owned company.
<b>HOLISTIC SELECT</b> • (Wellness Pet) • Tewksbury, MA • (800) 225-0904 • holisticselect.com					
\$3.36	15, 10 GF	4 ALS, 11 AM	13 Meal, 2 Both	23% - 35% P 8% - 16% F	Grain-free varieties use some combination of potatoes, peas, chickpeas, pumpkin, and lentils for carbs. Grain-containing varieties use brown rice, white rice, oatmeal, oats, pumpkin, barley, and/or peas. Probiotics, prebiotics, and digestive enzymes appear on the Guaranteed Analysis (for guaranteed levels of inclusion).
<b>HOUND &amp; GATOS</b> • St. Francis, WI • (888) 896-2951 • houndgatos.com					
\$4.36	5, 3 GF	5 ALS	5 Meat	27% - 30% P 16% - 19% F	Each variety has a fresh deboned meat from a cage-free, grass-fed, or wild-caught source as its first ingredient and eggs as the second; no meat meals are used. Grain-free varieties are legume-free, using sweet potato and tapioca for carbs. The two grain-containing foods use spelt and quinoa ("ancient grains") as well as sweet potato and tapioca for carbs. All foods contain added taurine.
<b>I AND LOVE AND YOU</b> • Boulder, CO • (855) 459-5683 • iandloveandyou.com					
\$3.30	11, 9 GF	11 ALS	11 Both	28% - 34% P 13% - 17% F	A fresh meat appears first in each food's ingredient list, followed by a meat meal. Three of the five <b>Naked Essentials</b> foods are grain-free and use garbanzo beans, lentils, and peas; the two grain-containing foods use sorghum, oatmeal, and millet. The <b>Nude Superfood</b> line (three varieties) use some combination of peas, garbanzo beans, tapioca, chickpeas, and sweet potatoes. <b>Baked and Saucy</b> foods (two grain-free varieties) are baked (not extruded) and use pea flour, tapioca, and sweet potatoes as carbs. <b>Lovingly Simple</b> (one variety) contains chickpeas, sweet potatoes, peas, and lentils.
<b>INSTINCT</b> • Saint Louis, MO • (888) 519-7387 • instinctpetfood.com					
\$4.84	34, 25 GF	23 ALS, 11 AM	34 Both	24% - 38% P 12% - 25% F	Most Instinct foods have a meat as their first ingredient, followed by a meat meal; just four start with a meat meal and list a meat as the second or third ingredient. The <b>Be Natural</b> foods (five varieties) contain grain (barley, brown rice, oatmeal, and/or millet) and no legumes. <b>Limited Ingredient Diet</b> foods (three varieties) are grain-free (the contain peas and tapioca) and contain one animal species only. <b>Original</b> foods (five varieties) are grain-free; these use peas, chickpeas, and/or tapioca. <b>Raw Boost</b> foods (16 varieties, 12 grain-free) contain kibble and nuggets of freeze-dried raw meats; most use peas, tapioca, and chickpeas as carbs. The grain-containing varieties use brown rice, oatmeal, and barley. A new (and expensive) line, <b>Raw Longevity</b> (five varieties), features a 20% inclusion of raw freeze-dried meat (the Raw Boost foods contain only about 2.5% freeze-dried meat). They use peas, chickpeas, and tapioca for carbs.
<b>JIMINY'S</b> • Berkeley, CA • (844) 454-6469 • jiminys.com					
\$5.25	2	2 AM	2 Insect	24% - 26% P 12% F	A pioneer in the pet-food world, Jiminy's uses insect proteins – no mammals, poultry, or fish! Its cricket-based food contains oats, quinoa, sweet potato, brown rice, chickpeas, milo, and peas as carbs. The soldier fly larvae variety is a simpler formula, containing oats and sweet potatoes as carbs. These baked foods are humane and sustainable.
<b>LIFE'S ABUNDANCE</b> • Jupiter, FL • (877) 387-4564 • lifesabundance.com					
\$3.00	6, 1 GF	5 ALS, 1 AM	6 Meal	25% - 30% P 11.5% - 19% F	All varieties have a meat meal first on the ingredients list. The sole grain-free variety uses peas, chickpeas, potatoes, and sweet potatoes for carbs; the grain-containing foods use brown rice, oat groats, barley, and/or sweet potatoes. Food is made in small batches and shipped fresh. Company is employee-owned; products are sold and shipped direct to consumers.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>LOTUS</b> • Torrance, CA • (888) 995-6887 • lotuspetfoods.com					
\$5.33	14, 8 GF	14 ALS	8 Meat, 6 Both	18% - 30% P 9% - 16% F	Lotus foods are baked (not extruded) in small batches in Canada. Seven recipes are each available in a small and a regular kibble size (for 14 total varieties). All products contain fresh meat; some also contain meat meal. The eight grain-free varieties use peas, cassava flour, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and/or chickpeas as carbs. The grain-containing varieties use rye, brown rice, barley, and/or oats. Lotus is family-owned and -operated.
<b>LUCY PET</b> • Westlake Village, CA • (844) 724-5829 • lucypetproducts.com					
\$3.68	8, 6 GF	5 ALS, 3 AM	8 Both	22% - 25% P 14% - 16% F	Five of Lucy's six grain-free foods use chickpeas, peas, pumpkin, and quinoa as carb sources; the Duck & Potato variety uses potatoes, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin. The two grain-containing foods use brown rice and oatmeal. All varieties have meat and meat meal as #1 and #2 ingredients. Lucy's founder started this company in order to raise money for The Lucy Pet Foundation, a pet charity that provides free spay/neuter services to low-income communities in southern California.
<b>MERRICK</b> • (Nestlé Purina) • Amarillo, TX • (800) 664-7387 • merrickpetcare.com					
\$3.70	53, 31 GF	8 ALS, 45 AM	53 Both	21% - 38% P 9% - 17% F	Every Merrick food has a deboned meat as the first ingredient and a meat meal second. In all of the grain-containing varieties, brown rice, oatmeal, and barley are used as carb sources; a few varieties also use tapioca and/or quinoa. In all of the grain-free varieties, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and peas are used as carb sources. <b>Backcountry</b> foods (10 varieties) are coated with freeze-dried meat. All the <b>Classic Healthy Grains</b> foods (five) and <b>Healthy Grains</b> foods (four) contain grain. <b>Full Source</b> foods (six) contain meat, meat meal, and organ meats and are coated with freeze-dried meat. The <b>Grain Free</b> foods (12) all contain several meat meals. <b>Healthy Grains Freeze-Dried Raw-Coated</b> foods (four) contain no legumes and are coated with freeze-dried meats. <b>Lil' Plates</b> foods (seven) have smaller kibble sizes. Three of the five <b>Limited Ingredient</b> foods are grain-free.
<b>NATURAL BALANCE</b> • Upland, CA • (800) 829-4493 • naturalbalanceinc.com					
\$3.25	29, 11 GF	4 ALS, 25 AM	2 Meat, 1 Meal, 24 Both, 2 Veg	18% - 28% P 7.5% - 16% F	Most of Natural Balance's foods have a meat first on the ingredients list and a meat meal second or third. <b>L.I.D.</b> is Natural Balance's limited-ingredient line (22 varieties, eight grain-free, two vegetarian). Grain-containing varieties use brown rice and brewers rice; the two vegetarian foods also contain barley, oat groats, and peas. <b>Original Ultra</b> foods (four, one grain-free) use barley, oat groats, and peas, except for the grain-free variety, which uses lentils and peas. <b>Targeted Nutrition</b> foods (three varieties) are solution formulas (overweight, digestive sensitivity, joint support).
<b>NULO</b> • Austin, TX • (512) 476-6856 • nulo.com					
\$3.39	47, 32 GF	25 ALS, 22 AM	47 Both	27% - 35% P 7% - 18% F	All of Nulo's foods have a meat as a first ingredient and a meat meal second and/or third. Nulo's <b>Challenger</b> foods (five varieties) have a high meat inclusion, with meat or meat meal ingredients in the first five spots on the ingredients list. These use oats, millet, and barley as carbs. Each of the grain-free <b>Freestyle</b> line (13 varieties) uses some combination of peas, chickpeas, sweet potatoes, lima beans, and lentils as carbs. The five grain-containing <b>Frontrunner</b> foods use oats, barley, brown rice, and/or millet; the single grain-free variety uses chickpeas, sweet potatoes, and peas. Eighteen of the <b>MedalSeries</b> foods (23 varieties) are grain-free; peas, chickpeas, sweet potatoes, and/or lentils are used as carbs.
<b>NUTRAM</b> • Elmira, ON • (519) 669-6240 • nutram.com					
\$3.80	16, 6 GF	9 ALS, 7 AM	16 Both	22.5% - 36% P 9% - 17% F	All Nutram's foods contain a meat and a meat meal (or two) in the first two ingredients. Nutram uses grains (oatmeal, brown rice, and barley) and legumes (peas and/or lentils) as carb sources in its foods that contain grain. Peas, lentils, chickpeas are the carb sources in its grain-free foods (a couple have lower inclusions of butternut squash and pumpkin). Not yet available in the U.S.
<b>NUTRIENCE</b> • Baie d'Urfé, QC • (800) 554-2436 • nutrience.com					
\$3.45	28, 18 GF	19 ALS, 9 AM	1 Meat, 5 Meal, 22 Both	24% - 38% P 11% - 18% F	<b>Care</b> line (four varieties) are grain-free, "solutions" (dental, weight management, skin, calming) foods. <b>Grain-Free</b> foods (four) use peas, sweet potatoes and lentils as carbs. Five of the six <b>Infusion</b> foods contain grains (barley and oats) and peas and lentils; these are life-stage foods for regular, large, and small dogs. <b>Original</b> foods (five) contain grain (barley, oatmeal, and/or brown rice) and peas, and use meat meals only. Grain-free <b>Sub Zero</b> foods (nine grain-free varieties) are highest in protein and contain a surprising number of meats, meat meals, and organ meats – like, 12 or 13 sources of animal protein in each. Carb sources are peas, lentils, chickpeas, and/or sweet potatoes.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>NUTRISOURCE</b> • Perham, MN • (800) 525-9155 • nutrisourcepetfoods.com					
\$3.03	52, 26 GF	48 ALS, 4 AM	7 Meal, 45 Both	22% - 34% P 8% - 21% F	<b>Choice</b> (three varieties) contain meat meals and grain (brown rice, oatmeal, and barley). <b>Element</b> foods (four) contain grains (different combinations of brown rice, barley, oatmeal, millet, buckwheat middlings, and spelt) and a lot of meats and meat meals. There are 16 <b>Grain Inclusive Nutrisource</b> foods; these use brown rice, oatmeal, and barley as carbs. There are 17 <b>Grain Free Nutrisource</b> foods; these use lentils, garbanzo beans, peas, pea starch, and/or tapioca starch as carbs. Most of these Nutrisource foods use meat and meat meal as #1 and #2 ingredients (the lamb varieties use meat meal only). <b>Pure Vita</b> foods (12) use a meat and a meat meal from a single animal species. Three of them use grain (brown rice, oatmeal, barley); the grain-free varieties use peas, lentils, garbanzo beans, pea flour, pea starch, sunflower meal, and/or sweet potatoes.
<b>NUTRO ULTRA</b> • Franklin, TN • (800) 833-5330 • nutro.com					
\$3.01	9	2 ALS, 7 AM	9 Both	22% - 28% P 9% - 19% F	All nine Nutro Ultra life-stage foods (puppy, adult, senior, small breed, large breed, weight management) have chicken and chicken meal as #1 and #2 ingredients, as well as lamb and salmon meals. Carbs used include brown rice, brewers rice, sorghum, barley, and/or oats; no legumes are used as carbs, though pea protein and potato protein appear in a couple of formulas.
<b>ONLY NATURAL</b> • Boulder, CO • (888) 937-6677 • onlynaturalpet.com					
\$3.74	12, 9 GF	11 AM, 1 ALS	11 Both, 1 Insect	28% - 38% P 10% - 18% F	<b>Power Food</b> line (five varieties) are grain-free life-stage foods made with garbanzo beans, peas, and lentils. There are five <b>Raw Blends</b> foods, three that are grain-free (using garbanzo beans, peas, and lentils) and two "solutions" formulas that contain grain (barley, oats, and quinoa). Only Natural also offers a food with black soldier fly larvae as a protein source and pumpkin, oats, barley and quinoa as carbs; and a grain-free, "cold pressed" variety that uses sunflower seed meal, garbanzo beans, coconut meal, pumpkin, and sweet potato as carbs.
<b>OPEN FARM</b> • Toronto, ON • (833) 399-3403 • openfarmpet.com					
\$4.77	18, 9 GF	15 ALS, 3 AM	16 Both, 1 Insect, 1 Veg	22% - 33% P 12.5% - 16% F	All food-source animals in Open Farm foods are certified humanely raised, grass-fed/free-range; all fish are wild-caught. All but two varieties contain a meat source as the first ingredient, with a meat meal second or third on the ingredients list. Grain-free foods use potatoes, garbanzo beans, lentils, peas, sweet potatoes, and/or pumpkin as carbs. Foods with grain use oats, sorghum, quinoa, millet, and/or brown rice as carbs. Open Farm also offers an insect-based food with black soldier fly larvae (brown rice, barley, and oats are the carbs); and a vegan food with barley, fava beans, oats, sweet potato, and potato protein.
<b>ORIJEN</b> • (Champion) • Edmonton, AB • (877) 939-0006 • orijen.ca/en_CA • orijen.ca/en_US					
Can: \$4.56	Can: 9 GF	Can: 7 ALS, 2 AM	Can: 9 Meat	Can: 38% - 40% P 13% - 20% F	In Canada, Orijen offers nine grain-free life-stage foods made with fresh and dehydrated meats (including organ meats); no meat meals are used. These are very high-protein foods. Carb sources include lentils, peas, chickpeas, pinto beans, and/or navy beans. In the U.S., Orijen offers five grain-containing foods (Amazing Grains) that use oat groats, oats, and millet as carbs. The grain-free foods contain lentils, pinto beans, peas, navy beans, and chickpeas. Both the U.S. and Canadian products also contain pumpkin and butternut squash, but they are so low on the ingredients list that it's difficult to imagine they contribute much.
U.S.: \$4.57	U.S.: 14, 9 GF	U.S.: 12 ALS, 2 AM	U.S.: 9 Meat, 5 Both	U.S.: 38% - 42% P 13% - 20% F	
<b>PETCUREAN</b> • Chiliwack, BC • (866) 864-6112 • petcurean.com					
\$4.22	35, 24 GF	18 ALS, 13 AM	15 Meat, 14 Both, 5 Meal, 1 Veg	21% - 36% P 8% - 18% F	<b>Gather</b> foods (two grain-free varieties, one vegan) are certified organic and use peas and lentils; the vegan variety also contains barley, oats, potatoes, and quinoa. <b>Go!</b> foods (18 varieties, 12 grain-free) are "solution foods" (skin and coat, sensitive stomach, etc.). Most varieties have a meat first and a meat meal second on the ingredients list. The grain-free formulas use potatoes, peas, tapioca, lentils, and chickpeas; the grain-containing foods use oats, oatmeal, brown rice, and white rice. <b>Now Fresh</b> foods (11 grain-free varieties) use meat as a first ingredient, contain no meat meals, and use peas, pea flour, potatoes, potato flour, and/or tapioca for carbs. <b>Summit</b> (four life-stage foods) is available only in Canada; they contain meat meal (first ingredient) and oatmeal, brown rice, rye, and barley as carbs.
<b>PINNACLE</b> • (Breeder's Choice) • Irwindale, CA • (866) 500-6286 • pinnaclepet.com					
\$3.53	4	4 ALS	4 Both	29% P 15% F	All Pinnacle foods contain meat and meat meal, most as #1 and #2 ingredients. Carb sources include oatmeal, garbanzo beans, millet, and pumpkin; the duck variety also includes pumpkin.
<b>PROFESSIONAL+</b> • (Diamond) • Meta, MO • (800) 977-8797 • professionalpluspetfood.com					
\$1.27	4 GF	1 ALS, 3 AM	4 Both	23% - 26% P 10% - 15% F	All of these foods contain meat and meat meals (1st and 2nd on the ingredients list) and are grain-free, containing lentils, peas, pea flour, and sweet potatoes. Only one variety (Chicken & Pea) is for dogs of all life stages; the rest are for adult dogs only.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>RAWZ</b> • York, ME • (844) 480-8672 • rawznaturalpetfood.com					
\$6.80	4 GF	4 ALS	4 Meat	23% - 40% P 12% F	There are only fresh and dehydrated meats in the four Rawz foods; no meat meals or grains. Two are limited-ingredient foods, with a meat first ingredient and pea protein, pea starch, and peas appearing 2nd-4th on the ingredients. The other two foods have six or seven meat or dehydrated meats appearing at the top of the ingredients before the carbs: pea starch, peas, and tapioca starch.
<b>SOLID GOLD</b> • Chesterfield, MO • (800) 364-4863 • solidgoldpet.com					
\$3.26	26, 15 GF	12 ALS, 14 AM	25 Both, 1 Meal	18% - 41% P 6% - 18% F	All Solid Gold foods have a meat and a meat meal as the first and second ingredients. The 15 grain-free varieties use peas, chickpeas, lentils, tapioca, quinoa, sweet potato, and/or pumpkin. Barley, oatmeal, brown rice, chickpeas, peas, potatoes, and/or sweet potatoes are used in the grain-inclusive formulas. A new line called <b>Powered By Plasma</b> (three varieties) contain animal plasma.
<b>SPORT DOG FOOD</b> • Westhampton Beach, NY • (631) 684-9900 • sportdogfood.com					
\$2.39	11, 4 GF	8 ALS, 3 AM	11 Meal	26% - 30% P 14% - 22% F	A meat meal is the first ingredient in each Sport Dog food, and none of them contain any legume. <b>Active Series</b> foods (five varieties) contain grains (sorghum, millet, and/or oatmeal) and may contain sweet potato and cassava. <b>Elite 2.0</b> foods (four varieties) are grain-free; sweet potato, cassava, and/or potato are carb sources. Both <b>K9 Series</b> foods (two varieties) contain sorghum and millet and are potato-free; one also contains oatmeal. Sold on the company website and shipped direct.
<b>STELLA &amp; CHEWY'S</b> • Oak Creek, WI • (888) 477-8977 • stellaandchewys.com					
\$5.17	42, 17 GF	42 ALS	42 Both	22% - 36% P 12% - 18% F	Every Stella & Chewy's food has meat first and meat meal second on the ingredients list. The <b>Wholesome Grains</b> line (seven varieties) use oatmeal, barley, pumpkin, and quinoa as carbs. <b>Grain Free Raw Coated Kibble</b> (seven) use peas, lentils, and sometimes chickpeas as carbs. <b>Stella's Essentials</b> foods (10, four grain-free) feature cage-free poultry, wild-caught fish, or grass-fed meat. The grain-containing varieties use barley, oatmeal, brown rice, and millet; the grain-free ones use lentils, peas, and chickpeas. <b>Raw Blend Baked Kibble</b> foods (seven, with five grain-free) are coated with freeze-dried meat and have nuggets of freeze-dried meat mixed into the kibble. The grain-containing foods use oatmeal, barley, pumpkin, and quinoa; peas and lentils are used in the grain-free. The <b>Wild Red</b> foods (11 varieties, all legume-free, 6 grain-free) are made with six animal species each. The grain-free varieties use sweet potato and tapioca; the grain-containing varieties contain barley and oatmeal.
<b>TASTE OF THE WILD</b> • (Diamond) • Meta, MO • (800) 342-4808 • tasteofthewildpetfood.com					
\$2.28	16, 12 GF	12 ALS, 4 AM	3 Meat, 13 Both	25% - 32% P 15% - 18% F	All Taste of the Wild foods have a meat as the first ingredient and, with the exception of the Prey line, a meat meal second. <b>Prey</b> foods (three grain-free) contain no meat meal; they use lentils (2nd ingredient) as the carb source. <b>Ancient Grains</b> foods (four varieties) contain sorghum, millet, and barley. <b>Taste of the Wild</b> foods (nine grain-free varieties) contain garbanzo beans, peas, lentils, pea flour, sweet potatoes, and/or potatoes as carb sources.
<b>TENDER AND TRUE</b> • Omaha, NE • (877) 616-4455 • tenderandtruepet.com					
\$4.34	7, 5 GF	7 ALS	7 Both	26% - 30% P 16% F	Each Tender and True food has a meat first on the ingredients list and a meat meal second. All animal protein sources are certified humane or, in the case of fish, wild-caught, MSC-certified sustainable. Three grain-free organic foods are offered; peas, chickpeas, tapioca starch, and/or potato starch are the carb sources. Two other grain-free formulas use tapioca starch, potato, peas, sweet potato, and/or pea flour as carbs. Two grain-containing foods use brown rice, tapioca starch, and potato starch.
<b>THE HONEST KITCHEN</b> • San Diego, CA • (866) 437-9729 • thehonestkitchen.com					
\$4.85	9, 5 GF	7 ALS, 2 AM	9 Meat	23% - 27% P 13.5% - 16% F	The first dry food for dogs that is truly human-grade. Every one of the ingredients are legally "edible" – the food is made in a manufacturing plant that makes only edible (human) food. These are not extruded foods; they are mixed, cold-pressed into "clusters" (rather than classic kibble) and then roasted and dehydrated. Meat is always the first ingredient. No meat meals are used, as meat meals are not human-edible. Grain-free varieties use potatoes, peas, lentils, and pumpkin as carbs; grain-containing foods use oats, barley, and pumpkin.
<b>TIKI DOG</b> • Chesterfield, MO • (866) 821-8562 • tikipets.com					
\$5.14	5 GF	5 ALS	5 Both	26.2% - 30% P 16% - 19% F	Tiki Dog's foods are meant for small dogs and have small-sized kibble. Each has meat as a first ingredient followed by a meat meal; each also contains liver. They are all grain-free (peas, chickpeas, lentils, and tapioca or tapioca flour serve as carb sources), and all the foods are baked, not extruded.

Average price/lb	# Varieties, # Grain-Free	# All Life Stages # Adult Maint.	Meat, Meal, Both, Veg?	Min. % Protein Min. % Fat	Notes
<b>TRIUMPH</b> • Red Bay, AL • (800) 705-2111 • triumphpetfood.com					
\$1.97	13, 6 GF	8 ALS, 5 AM	3 Meal, 10 Both	20% - 35% P 10% - 18% F	All but three Triumph foods have a meat as the first ingredient and a meat meal second; the three exceptions have meat meal only, as the first ingredient. <b>Free Spirit</b> foods (six grain-free varieties) contain tapioca starch, sweet potatoes, garbanzo beans, peas, and/or pea starch. <b>Simply Six</b> foods (two) are limited-ingredient and use brown rice, peas, and oatmeal as carbs. <b>Wild Spirit</b> foods (five) contain grains (brown rice, barley, oat groats, and rice bran); two of these also include peas. Triumph manufactures its own foods.
<b>TUSCAN NATURAL</b> • Las Vegas, NV • (888) 408-0895 • tuscannatural.com					
\$2.85	7, 2 GF	7 ALS	5 Meal, 2 Both	24% - 35% P 12% - 20% F	Two of Tuscan Natural's foods have a meat as the first ingredient; all the rest of the foods use meat meals only. The <b>Simply Pure</b> foods (five varieties, one grain-free) are limited-ingredient. Brown and white rice are the carbs in the grain-containing varieties; sweet potatoes and chickpeas are used in the grain-free food. <b>Harvest</b> (one) uses lentils and sweet potatoes as carb sources; grain-free <b>Carne</b> uses potatoes and peas.
<b>ULTIMATES</b> • (Midwestern Pet) • Evansville, IN • (812) 867-7466 • ultimatespetfood.com					
\$1.62	12, 4 GF	7 ALS, 5 AM	12 Meal	22% - 30% P 12% - 20% F	All of the Ultimates foods are made with meat meal as the first ingredient. There are six grain-inclusive life-stage formulas; these contain brown rice, ground rice, and/or rice bran, and three contain peas as well. Four grain-free foods use potatoes, peas, pea starch, chickpeas, pea fiber, and sweet potato as carbs. <b>Sensitive</b> varieties (two) are for dogs who have digestive or skin and coat issues; these use brown rice, oatmeal, barley, and ground rice as carbs.
<b>VÉRUS</b> • Abingdon, MD • (888) 828-3787 • veruspetfoods.com					
\$3.61	8, 3 GF	5 ALS, 3 AM	5 Meal, 3 Both	17% - 26% P 8% - 16% F	The Five VÉRUS foods that contain grains are made with meat meal (first ingredient) and oat groats, brown rice, rice bran, potato, barley, and/or sorghum. The three grain-free foods contain meat (first ingredient) and meat meal (second); lentils, chickpeas, peas, sweet potatoes, tapioca starch, and/or yams. VÉRUS includes a maximum ash content on the guaranteed analysis. VÉRUS foods are made in an EU-certified facility.
<b>VISIONARY KETO PET</b> • Los Angeles, CA • (800) 325-0043 • visionarypet.com					
\$4.55	2 GF	2 ALS	2 Both	43% P 33% F	This company makes just two foods; both are grain-free and legume-free. Miscanthus grass is used as the only carb source in both foods. Beef, pork fat, pork meal, chicken meal, and whole egg are the first five ingredients of one; chicken meal, chicken, chicken fat, and dried eggs are the first four ingredients of the other.
<b>WELLNESS</b> • (Wellness Pet) • Tewksbury, MA • (800) 225-0904 • wellnesspetfood.com					
\$3.72	57, 28 GF	12 ALS, 45 AM	1 Meat, 55 Both, 1 Egg/Veg	21% - 38% P 8% - 19% F	Meat is the first ingredient in all but one Wellness foods (a plant-based food that contains eggs), followed by a meat meal. <b>Complete Health</b> has 19 varieties, six grain-free. Oatmeal, barley, brown rice, rice, peas, oats, and/or sweet potatoes are the carb sources in the grain-containing foods; potatoes, peas, and chickpeas are used in the grain-free varieties. <b>Core</b> foods (16 varieties, 12 grain-free) are higher-protein life-stage foods. Peas, potatoes, and lentils serve as carbs in the grain-free varieties. <b>Core Digestive Health</b> foods (six varieties) contain digestive enzymes, prebiotic fibers, and guaranteed levels of probiotics. <b>Core RawRev</b> foods (10 varieties, six grain-free) are essentially Core plus nuggets of freeze-dried meats. <b>Simple</b> foods (six varieties, four grain-free) are limited-ingredient, containing one animal species only. All but one use meat (first on ingredient list) and a meat meal second (the duck variety uses meat only). Oatmeal, peas, rice, and/or millet are the carb sources in the grain-containing foods; potatoes and peas are used in the grain-free foods. Wellness owns and operates its dry-food manufacturing facilities.
<b>WHOLE EARTH FARMS</b> • (Merrick) • Amarillo, TX • (800) 323-3353 • feedgoodness.com					
\$2.37	10, 4 GF	1 ALS, 9 AM	10 Both	24% - 27% P 14% F	Whole Earth Farms is Merrick's economy line. Its six grain-inclusive formulas have a meat as the first ingredient and meat meal second. They use rice, barley, canola meal, and sorghum as carb sources. The four grain-free varieties each have a meat meal as the first ingredient with a meat used further down the ingredients list. These use potatoes, sweet potatoes, canola meal, and/or peas as carb sources.
<b>ZIGNATURE</b> • Valencia, CA • (888) 897-7207 • zignature.com					
\$3.61	21, 18 GF	21 ALS	21 Both	25% - 32% P 12.5% - 17% F	All of Zignature's foods contain have meat as the first ingredient and meat meal second. Three "legume-free" foods use oats and millet. All but two of Zignature's grain-free foods use only one animal species per formula; the Zessential formula (in regular and small bites) contains turkey, turkey meal, salmon, lamb meal, and duck meal. The grain-free foods use chickpeas, peas, and/or peas flour as carbs. None of the foods contain chicken; many of the animal sources are exotic (i.e., kangaroo, goat, venison, guinea fowl).



# Should You Bring Your Dog?

*Many of us like to bring our dogs wherever we go. But every scenario isn't right for every dog, and a little bit of management can go a long way toward keeping everyone safe.*

*It's critical for you to supervise your dog any time you bring him to a place with a lot of people. Humans sometimes do unpredictable things to dogs (like grabbing their head to kiss them), unaware that not all dogs like that! Protect your pup from unwanted interactions, monitor his stress level – and remove him to a secure room or crate, away from all the people, when you can't actively supervise him.*

Every now and then there's an incredible dog with an experienced owner who can go everywhere together: wedding anniversary at the in-laws, the kids' chaotic birthday party, the week-long group vacation house with two other unknown dogs.

That dog drives me crazy.

Why? Because that dog makes everybody else think their dog should be able to do those things. Then they try it, and a Bad Thing happens. The owners now think their dog is problematic.

You know who's problematic? We humans – when we don't anticipate that some parts of our lives are not suitable for sharing with our particular dog. Rather than thinking, "Wow, it's amazing that my dog can navigate most of human life really well," we think, "Dang it, what's wrong with my dog that he can't handle the neighbor's picnic without causing a disaster?"

Please do your dog a favor and don't assume she should be able to handle every situation. We don't expect all humans to handle each social situation with equal aplomb! It's

not fair to impose the same set of behavioral expectations on all dogs.

Instead, with your dog's specific skills and limitations in mind, take the time to think through situations ahead of time, and make adult decisions about whether and how to safely include the dog.

I know I sound like a spoilsport. But outside-the-norm adventures can easily result in the dreaded trigger-stacking that can lead to a bite that owners will say came out of nowhere. Here's what that "nowhere" really was: a long car ride + sister-in-law's unfamiliar house + crowded spaces + unknown people + no exercise + oops, kitty cat! + young people squealing = bite!

## MANAGEMENT KEEPS EVERYONE SAFE

In some cases, leaving your dog home for a few hours, or using a trusted pet-sitter to care for her for a few days, is the best solution. In other cases, bringing her along, but using a management tool (or combination of tools), such as a crate, exercise pen, leash, baby gate, or closed door to prevent unsupervised socializing, will be sufficient to prevent her from getting overwhelmed, overstimulated, or scared, and snapping at someone in order to get the space she needed.

Of course I'm not advocating a life of separation for your dog! I'm talking about critical moments here and there, and sometimes just an hour or two. I love helping folks weave their dogs into as many hours of their lives that they can – as long as it's safe and happy for humans and canines alike.

However, I can't begin to tell you how many tragic situations could be averted if owners would accept the idea that their dog isn't currently a good fit for every single scene and that management is the perfect way to help her. For example:



Photo by The Good Brigade | Getty Images

## READER SERVICE

Visit our website at:  
[whole-dog-journal.com](http://whole-dog-journal.com)

To order back article archives go to:  
[whole-dog-journal.com](http://whole-dog-journal.com)

To change your mailing or e-mail address, renew your subscription, check payment status, or ask questions about your account, visit us at:

[whole-dog-journal.com](http://whole-dog-journal.com)  
 or call (800) 829-9165.

**To change your address by mail,** attach your present mailing label to this form (or a copy of this form), enter your new address below, and mail it to:

**The Whole Dog Journal,**  
 P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR RENEWAL IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!**  
[whole-dog-journal.com](http://whole-dog-journal.com)

**To order or renew a subscription,** enter your name and address above and check the subscription term you prefer:

2 years (24 issues) – \$54

1 year (12 issues) – \$29

IN CANADA,

1 year – \$39 CDN

2 years – \$72 CDN

ALL OTHER COUNTRIES,

1 year – \$47 US

2 years – \$94 US

Check enclosed

AmEx

MasterCard

Visa

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Photo by skynesher | Getty Images

*When in a social setting, it's easy to get distracted and forget to watch your dog for a moment – and if that's the moment when an unfamiliar child decides to give your kid-phobic dog a big bear hug, the fun barbecue just might get interrupted by a trip to the ER. This is why the best trainers use management tools such as leashes, gates, and crates to keep everyone happy and safe.*

■ Crate your dog in the quiet bedroom (with a nice marrow bone) when the cousins at the big joint beach house get super rowdy and start a chase through the house.

■ Pop your dog behind a gate (with a fun kibble scatter) when guests arrive to the party your brother's hosting. She can get a sense of things as she sniffs and listens from a nice little distance. With most dogs, the gate can open to a calm greeting eventually – whether that's a minute or an hour later.

■ Before you expect your dog to sit through a full brunch at an outdoor cafe leashed under your chair, start with a to-go cup of coffee. That way, you can call it quits if that scene (full of strangers approaching, amazing food smells, and unknown dogs) is stressful and/or frustrating for her. A nice calm morning at home with a frozen food-stuffed Toppl might be the kind of brunch that would earn five stars from her.

■ Consider choosing a trusted pet-sitter if you're going for a stay at a friend's or relative's house, rather than forcing your dog into a situation that brings out the worst in her. It can

be hard to find the right pet-sitter, but it's sure a lot easier when you give it the priority it deserves. Start early. And when you find a good one, treat them so very well that they'll drop anything to come back next time.

Everyone can accept that it makes sense to put up a temporary pen to keep the dog and the plumber from being in each other's business all day – but there's more of an emotional component to leaving your dog out of “fun” adventures in your life. However, it sure stinks when trying to make sure Fido “gets to enjoy the vacation” ends up with everyone thinking he's a dangerous dog.

Does it feel like it's taking a step backward to have to use a crate or gate again? Kick that thought to the curb! That's an old-fashioned mindset that harms many dog/human relationships. Do what all the best trainers do: either leave the dog home this time, or embrace the simple management strategies that set everyone up for success. 🐾

*Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA, is a Family Dog Mediator (FDM) who specializes in puppyhood coaching in Alexandria, VA. She's also the author of 101 Rescue Puppies. See page 24 for more information.*



HEALTH

# Anti-Anxiety Medications

*Your veterinarian has a number of medication options available to help your anxious dog feel better and enhance your desensitization and behavior-modification program.*



Photo by Catherine Falls Commercial | Getty Images

*Anxiety may manifest in dogs as distress when separated from their owners, extreme vigilance or excitement in public, overreactivity to other dogs, and many other behaviors that many owners find problematic. These behaviors are not just burdensome for the dog's owner, they are indications of the dog's distress, if not suffering.*

**A**nxiety, and the behavior problems stemming from it, is increasingly common in our companion dogs. If you have one of these dogs, you know how heart-breaking and disruptive this can be. Anxious dogs are not comfortable. They can't relax. Sometimes they are downright panicky. This can lead to dangerous destructive behaviors, house-soiling, and even aggression.

These issues often strain not only your relationship with your dog, but also your relationships with other humans in your home. Just going for a walk or a ride in the car can be stressful, not to mention going to see the vet or the groomer.

Luckily, there are many safe and effective medications that can help your quivering canine. The trick is to find the right ones, at the right dose, and the right combination.

Take detailed notes of your dog's behaviors, and response or lack of response to any drugs and dosages tried. Your veterinarian will use this information to tweak your dog's protocol until the desired result is achieved. It's a process that can take some time, so be patient and work closely with your veterinarian.

## WHAT MEDICATION CAN AND CANNOT DO FOR YOUR DOG

It's important to mention that medication alone is not likely to be a magic bullet, miraculously turning your anxious dog into a calm, confident, well-mannered one; however, it drastically enhances the effectiveness of desensitization to triggers and behavioral modification – the mainstay of treatment and long-term management of anxiety-associated behavior issues.

Many highly anxious dogs fail to show the kind of progress in training that is typical for dogs without anxiety; that's because anxiety, fear, and panic impair a dog's ability to focus and learn. Anxiolytic (anxiety-reducing) medications ease the symptoms of anxiety, fear, and panic, allowing your dog to absorb and learn during desensitization and behavior modification exercises. The combination of medication and behavior modification, under the direction of a force-free trainer and veterinarian or veterinary behavior specialist, is the gold standard for treating canine anxiety.

## DIFFERENT CLASSES, DIFFERENT ACTIONS

There are several classes of drugs used for anxiety in dogs. Some are long-acting and meant to be used daily. Others are short-acting and meant to be used situationally as needed, although they can be used

daily in combination with a long-acting medication.

Most of the drugs used for anxiety in dogs are prescribed off-label, meaning the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has not determined the safety and efficacy of the medication for the intended purpose.

Don't let off-label use be a deal-breaker for you. These medications have been used safely and effectively in veterinary medicine for decades. Your veterinarian should have a conversation with you regarding off-label drug usage so you can give informed consent, and you're ready to get started.

When multiple medications are necessary to achieve the desired result, drugs from different classes can be safely combined. This enhances their beneficial effects without doubling up on side effects. Never use two drugs from the same class at the same time.

We'll take a look at each of the

main classes of drugs used for anxiety in dogs, which are:

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)
- Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)
- Benzodiazepines
- Serotonin Antagonist and Reuptake Inhibitors (SARIs)
- Alpha-2 Agonists
- Anticonvulsant/neuropathic pain relievers

## ■ Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)

The drugs that belong to this class and are commonly given to dogs are:

- Fluoxetine (Prozac)
- Paroxetine (Paxil)
- Citalopram (Celexa)
- Sertraline (Zoloft)

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter highly involved in mood and emotions. It is known to produce calm and lessen overactive responses to normal stimuli. SSRIs decrease the reabsorption of serotonin, resulting in increased amounts circulating in the brain, which helps manage anxiety, aggression, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors (e.g., self-mutilation by licking or chewing, flank sucking, tail chasing, pacing/circling, incessant barking) in dogs.

SSRIs are long-acting medications that are prescribed for dogs with generalized anxiety issues needing help on a daily basis. They generally take four to six weeks to reach full effect, so shorter-acting anxiolytic medications are usually prescribed with them in the beginning.

Never use an SSRI with a TCA, nor use two SSRIs at once, as this can result in serotonin syndrome (see sidebar). If you don't see the desired result from the first SSRI medication you try, your vet should guide you through tapering your dog off the first medication before prescribing another.

## Serotonin Syndrome

Serotonin syndrome is what happens when there is too much serotonin floating around in the brain. It can happen either by accidental overdose of one serotonin-enhancing medication or inadvertently when two or more serotonin-enhancing medications are used together. It is potentially life-threatening so it's important to recognize the early signs.

Initially, the dog may seem overly sedate. This is followed by panting, confusion, disorientation, agitation, vocalization, vomiting, and diarrhea. Without intervention, next comes rigid muscles, tremors, seizures, coma, and death.

If you have any feeling this may be happening, seek veterinary attention right away. Give your veterinarian a list of all medications and supplements your dog is on, along with dosages. Treatment is mostly supportive and usually requires hospitalization for 12 to 48 hours.

Here are medications/supplements most commonly involved in serotonin syndrome in dogs:

- SSRIs (fluoxetine)
- TCAs (clomipramine)
- SARIs (trazodone)
- MAO inhibitors (selegiline)
- Opioids (tramadol)
- Tryptophan (found in over-the-counter [OTC] supplements)
- Chlorpheniramine (an OTC antihistamine)
- Dextromethorphan (present in some OTC cough suppressants)
- St. John's Wort, ginseng, griffonia seed extract (herbal)

### ■ Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)

The drugs that belong to this class and are commonly given to dogs are:

- Clomipramine (Clomicalm)
- Amitriptyline (Elavil)

TCAs affect several different neurotransmitters, including serotonin, resulting in increased calm and dampened panic responses. They are long-acting medications given daily to help manage anxiety and obsessive-compulsive behaviors in dogs. They do not work for aggression. TCAs usually take three to four weeks to maximum effect. Do not use with an SSRI, and never use more than one TCA at a time. Do not stop abruptly. Always taper off these medications.

### ■ Benzodiazepines

The drugs that belong to this class and are commonly given to dogs are:

- Alprazolam (Xanax)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin)
- Lorazepam (Ativan)
- Diazepam (Valium)

Benzodiazepines are fast-acting (60 to 90 minutes), short duration (4 to 12 hours), anxiolytic medications that promote calm by increasing the effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), the main inhibitory

neurotransmitter in the central nervous system. They can be used alone or in combination with other classes of behavior-modifying drugs. They can be used “as needed” for situational triggers, or included as part of a daily multi-drug protocol.

Benzodiazepines are federally controlled drugs (meaning there are legal limits on their prescription). Physical dependence with increasing dose tolerance is unfortunately a possibility when benzodiazepines are used long-term. To avoid withdrawal symptoms (confusion, vocalization, tremors, twitching, seizures, and death), always slowly taper off these medications after long-term use.

### ■ Serotonin Antagonist and Reuptake Inhibitors (SARIs)

Only one drug belongs to this class that is commonly given to dogs:

- Trazodone

Trazodone is pretty much the only SARI used in veterinary medicine. SARIs keep more serotonin circulating by both decreasing its reabsorption and blocking its receptors. SARIs have both anxiolytic and sedative effects. They are rapid-acting (30 to 90 minutes), have a short duration (4 to 8 hours), and are non-addictive. They can be used alone, as needed for

situational anxiety, or included daily as part of a multi-drug regime.

Trazodone has a wide dosage range so it will typically be started low and ramped up from there. Because SARIs increase serotonin, combining them with SSRIs and TCAs comes with a slight risk of serotonin syndrome. However, trazodone is routinely used together with SSRIs in dogs, with few reports of this.

### ■ Alpha-2 Agonists

The drugs that belong to this class and are commonly given to dogs are:

- Clonidine
- Dexmedetomidine (Sileo)

Alpha-2 agonists inhibit the release of norepinephrine (adrenaline) in the central nervous system. As inhibitors, they really work only if given *before* your dog gets upset. Once he’s upset, adrenaline has already been released along with its “fight or flight” response, and it’s too late.

Alpha-2 agonists are given prior to stressful situations known to invoke fear in your dog (such as veterinary visits or any situation that tends to trigger your dog’s separation anxiety, noise phobia, fear aggression, or leash reactivity). Onset is rapid (30 to 90 minutes), duration is short (2 to 4 hours), and they are safe to use with most other anxiolytic medications. As such, they can be added to a daily multi-drug regimen.

### ■ Anticonvulsant/neuropathic pain reliever

Only one drug belongs to this class that is commonly given to dogs:

- Gabapentin

Gabapentin is frequently used in combination with other anxiolytic medications for its mild sedative effect. It works by blocking certain biochemical channels in the brain, which calms overstimulated neurons, helping lessen feelings of anxiety. Gabapentin takes effect within 1 to 2 hours and lasts 6 to 8 hours. There is a wide dose range. Your veterinarian

## Potential Alternatives to Medication

Some owners prefer a more natural approach to their dog’s health, avoiding long-term prescription medications if at all possible. Here’s a list of things that are worth trying, either alone or in combination:

- Choose a Fear Free Certified veterinary clinic – [fearfreepets.com](http://fearfreepets.com)
- Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP) – [adaptil.com](http://adaptil.com)
- Alpha-casozepine (a hydrolyzed milk protein with calming properties, such as Zylkene: [vetoquinolusa.com/content/zylkene](http://vetoquinolusa.com/content/zylkene))
- Purina ProPlan Calming Care – [proplanvetdirect.com](http://proplanvetdirect.com)
- Melatonin (See [whole-dog-journal.com/health/melatonin-is-safe-for-dogs](http://whole-dog-journal.com/health/melatonin-is-safe-for-dogs))
- Supplements containing L-theanine, such as Solliquin ([solliquin.com](http://solliquin.com)), yuMove Calming Support Soft Chews ([yumove.com](http://yumove.com)), or Zesty Paws Calming Bites ([zestypaws.com](http://zestypaws.com))
- Supplements containing L-tryptophan, such as Quiet Moments Calming Drops ([naturvet.com](http://naturvet.com)) or Zesty Paws Calming Bites ([zestypaws.com](http://zestypaws.com))
- Thundershirt – [thundershirt.com](http://thundershirt.com)

will likely start with a low dosage and increase the dose as needed. It can be used situationally, often in combination with trazodone, or it can be added to a daily multi-drug regime.

For more information about gabapentin, see “Gabapentin for Dogs: What You Should Know,” WDJ April 2021.

### BE PERSISTENT

Finding the right medication (or combination of medications) and the right doses for your dog’s anxiety can be challenging. If a medication is not working well enough and maximum dose has not been reached, sometimes simply increasing the dose may work, assuming the side effects aren’t too bad. Other times a different drug from the same class will work better. Combining medications from different classes is often the ticket.

And remember, SSRIs and TCAs take weeks to reach full affect, so adding a short-acting drug in the beginning is always helpful.

Here are some examples of how a case may be managed:

- A dog with separation anxiety might be started on fluoxetine daily, with alprazolam as the short-acting medication for the first 4 to 6 weeks. If this isn’t working, the veterinarian may add gabapentin, or discontinue alprazolam and add trazodone. At 6 weeks, if the desired effect has not been achieved, the vet may increase the dose of fluoxetine and add clonidine. If this doesn’t work, fluoxetine may be tapered off and a different SSRI or TCA started as the long-acting daily medication.

- A dog with generalized anxiety who is also reactive on leash (see

“On-Leash Aggression,” page 22) may do well with a daily SSRI or TCA, and clonidine given an hour before going for walks.

- Trazodone combined with gabapentin is frequently used for fear and anxiety associated with veterinary visits. If this isn’t enough, clonidine or dexmedetomidine may be added.

Fortunately, no matter what your dog’s issues are, there are many possible medications and medication combinations available to try, with the simple goal of finding what works best for your dog with the least amount of side effects. 🐾

*Dr. Eileen Fatcheric is a graduate of Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. She currently sees patients part time at VCA Fairmount Animal Hospital in Syracuse, New York.*

## MOST COMMONLY PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS FOR DOGS WITH ANXIETY

CLASS	SAMPLE MEDICATION	ONSET	DURATION	INDICATIONS	CONTRA-INDICATIONS	CAUTIONS	SIDE EFFECTS	USED
SSRI	Fluoxetine	Slow, 4-6 weeks	Long, 24-48 hours	Aggression, anxiety, phobias, compulsive behaviors	Seizures, liver disease	Diabetes, bleeding disorders; taper off	Anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea	Once daily, alone or in combination
TCA	Clomipramine	Slow, 3-4 weeks	Long, 24-48 hours	Anxiety, compulsive behaviors	Thyroid disease, seizures, MAO inhibitors, male breeding dogs	Cardiac disease; taper off	Vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation	Once or twice daily, alone or in combination
Benzodiazepine	Alprazolam	Rapid, 30-60 minutes	Short, 2-6 hours	Anxiety, phobias, fear	Liver disease, glaucoma	Kidney disease, physical dependence; taper off	Sedation, wobbliness	Two to four times daily as needed, alone or in combination
SARI	Trazodone	Intermediate, 1-2 hours	Short, 2-8 hours	Anxiety, sedation	MAO inhibitors	Cardiac disease, kidney disease, liver disease, bleeding disorders	Increased appetite, mild GI upset	Two to three times daily as needed, alone or in combination
Alpha-2 agonist	Clonidine	Rapid, 30-90 minutes	Short, 2-4 hours	Anxiety, fear, panic	If already agitated	Cardiovascular disease, kidney disease	Sedation, dry mouth, constipation, low heart rate	One to four times daily as needed, alone or in combination
Anti-convulsant, neuropathic pain reliever	Gabapentin	Intermediate, 1-2 hours	Intermediate, 6-8 hours	Anxiety, fear	None	Kidney disease; taper off	Sedation, wobbliness	Two to three times daily, usually in combination



CONSUMER  
ALERT

# What's a Therapy Dog?

*Do you and your dog absolutely love people? If so, this rewarding volunteer activity might be for you. Here's how to prepare yourself and your canine partner for providing comfort to people in need.*



Photo © monkeybusinessimages | Getty Images

*The more you take your dog everywhere and invite petting from strangers of all ages, the better. In fact, the most important instruction you can teach your prospective therapy dog is, "Go say hi." Well-socialized therapy dogs look forward to visiting all kinds of people in all kinds of settings.*

Therapy dogs are trained to provide affection and support to humans. They visit hospitals, assisted living homes, courtrooms, counseling offices, schools, airports, and other facilities where they offer comfort and relieve stress.

In addition to providing opportunities for petting and support, some therapy dog/handler teams work with healthcare professionals to improve treatment outcomes (animal-assisted therapy) or participate in literacy (read-to-the-dogs) programs.

Therapy dogs do not enjoy special rights of access to housing, travel, or entry into businesses that do not permit pet dogs. Their training differs from that of service and emotional support dogs, who are trained to focus on a single person; therapy dogs interact with many people in different environments for short periods.

## THE THERAPY DOG QUALIFICATIONS

To be a registered therapy dog, your dog should be:

- At least 1 year old (the minimum age for some programs is 18 or 24 months).
- Friendly, affectionate, and enjoy being petted by strangers.

- Calm, quiet, and well behaved, possessing basic "good manners" skills.
- Clean and well groomed.
- Comfortable traveling to new locations.
- More interested in interacting with people than with other animals.

The therapy dog/handler team is a unit. A dog and handler train together, are tested together, and make visits together. This means that you, the handler, have requirements, too. A therapy dog handler should:

- Enjoy interacting with people.
- Act as your dog's advocate, always putting your dog's needs first.
- Learn therapy dog handling techniques.
- Dress and behave professionally.

## WHAT TRAINING IS REQUIRED?

There are no standard courses that must be completed in order for your dog to become a therapy dog, though some programs, such as Pet Partners and Intermountain Therapy Animals, require prospective handlers to attend training workshops without their dogs.

That said, all therapy dog organizations screen dog/handler teams. Some dog trainers and pet supply stores like Petco offer therapy dog training classes as preparation for these entry level exams. Most preparation classes include the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test. In the CGC test, dogs are expected to:

- Accept being petted by a friendly stranger and sit politely for petting.
- Be clean and well groomed.
- Walk calmly on a loose leash.
- Walk calmly through a crowd of moving people.
- Sit and stay on cue; come when called.
- Walk calmly past another dog.
- Respond calmly to a noise distraction.
- Remain calm while the handler leaves the room for 3 minutes.

## SKILLS THAT WILL BE TESTED

Most therapy dog organizations use all or part of the CGC test as a skills test, then add behaviors that demonstrate an aptitude for therapy work. In this part of the test, dogs are expected to interact with people in a friendly way and:

- Stay relaxed during an overall exam (thorough handling of all body parts).
- Stay calm during exuberant, clumsy petting.
- Stay calm during a restraining hug.
- Stay calm and friendly during role-play with a person in a wheelchair.
- Recover quickly from distractions like angry yelling, bumps from behind, or role-play with someone using a walker.
- Stay calm while being petted by several people.
- Ignore distractions like toys or food.
- Accept a treat gently.

## HOW DO I GET MY DOG CERTIFIED?

While the term “certification” is used by some therapy dog organizations, most prefer the term “registration.” Anyone can purchase from online sources an official-looking therapy dog vest, certificate, and ID badge, but what matters to facilities that welcome therapy dogs is their training, screening, and liability insurance. Online sites that register or certify therapy dogs for a fee don’t provide these essentials, which makes their credentials meaningless.

In contrast, legitimate therapy dog

## How Can I Learn More?

To ascertain which of the national therapy-dog organizations would be a good fit for you and your dog, see their websites (listed below), which explain animal-assisted interactions in detail and describe the organizations’ different approaches and requirements.

- **Alliance of Therapy Dogs, formerly Therapy Dogs, Inc.** [therapydogs.com](https://www.therapydogs.com)
- **Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs.** [golden-dogs.org](https://www.golden-dogs.org)
- **Intermountain Therapy Animals.** [therapyanimals.org](https://www.therapyanimals.org)
- **Love on a Leash.** [loveonaleash.org](https://www.loveonaleash.org)
- **Pet Partners, previously Delta Society.** [petpartners.org](https://www.petpartners.org)
- **Therapy Dogs International.** [tdi-dog.org](https://www.tdi-dog.org)
- **For local organizations, see the AKC’s list of recognized therapy dog organizations at [tinyurl.com/WDJ-local-therapydog](https://www.tinyurl.com/WDJ-local-therapydog)**

The following books are also valuable resources:

- ***Teaming with Your Therapy Dog***  
by Ann R. Howie, Purdue University Press, 2015
- ***Becoming a Therapy Dog Team: Guidance and Advice***  
by Katha Miller-Winder, Ph.D., independently published, 2021

organizations offer handler support and training, opportunities to visit prescreened facilities, social events for dogs and handlers – and, importantly, they provide liability insurance to dog/handler teams who are registered members in good standing. Membership fees, background checks, dog health/age/breed requirements, renewal schedules, and volunteer time commitments vary.

## IMPORTANT CONCEPTS FOR HANDLERS

Therapy dogs are the stars of every visit, but their handlers’ support is crucial. Proactive therapy dog handlers anticipate problems and protect their dogs from uncomfortable situations. As Kathy Klotz, executive director of Intermountain Therapy Animals, explains:

- Dogs are true partners, not pieces of equipment to trot out when it serves our own needs and desires.

*In animal-assisted therapy programs, therapy dogs and their handlers work under the direction of healthcare professionals to help clients achieve specific goals.*

They should be respected, honored, and appreciated.

- Dogs’ intuition usually exceeds our own as to who most needs their attention and even what that attention should look like.

- Only a few dogs (some experts estimate only 10%) have the appropriate temperament to truly enjoy therapy work. A dog who doesn’t want the job will make no connection with clients, no magic will happen, and the handler will not find visits rewarding at all.

- Therapy dogs who enjoy their work willingly consent to receiving greetings, petting, and hugs. Handlers need to be proactive so that no client interacts with their partners in any way that the animals don’t enjoy. Therapy dogs must never be required to “put up” with anything that’s beyond their capacity or tolerance. 🐾

*CJ Puotinen spent 30 years managing pet therapy programs and visiting all types of facilities with her Labrador Retrievers Samantha and Chloe. Her current Lab, Blue Sapphire, is not a therapy dog.*



Photo © Casarsaguru | Getty Images



# On-Leash Aggression

*It's not uncommon for dogs to behave badly when they are leashed and see other dogs – and it doesn't mean they are truly aggressive. Here's what to do to achieve peace on leash.*



© Photography | Getty Images

*Does your dog react aggressively when he's on leash and sees other dogs? There are several reasons that dogs might do this – and in many cases, the dog might be perfectly fine with other dogs when he's not on leash! You can definitely improve this behavior, but you have to start by never allowing your dog to greet other dogs on leash and putting more space – perhaps much more space – between your leashed dog and other dogs you see.*

When you adopted your dog, you were probably looking forward to nice, long, stress-relieving walks together. But instead of the peaceful strolls you had imagined, your dog is becoming increasingly aggressive toward other dogs you encounter on your walks. Why is this happening? And what can you do about it?

Dogs are a social species, but that doesn't mean they all get along with each other. After all, we humans are a social species, and we don't all get along!

There are several reasons why your dog might be acting aggressive when he's on leash and sees other dogs:

■ **Frustrated on leash.** This can happen with even a very confident, friendly, social dog who is accustomed to greeting other canines he meets while on leash but is prevented from doing so. His resulting frustration may cause him to become reactive.

Reactivity is defined as *an abnormal level of arousal in response to a normal stimulus*. While frustration reactivity looks seriously aggressive, in many cases, the frustrated greeter is socially appropriate if allowed to interact with other dogs off-leash. But be careful! Other dogs may take offense

at your dog's level of arousal and respond with defensive aggression. You'll do better to manage and/or modify your dog's arousal so he is reasonably calm before allowing dog-dog interactions.

To avoid leash frustration, prevent the development of frustration-causing expectations by never allowing on-leash greetings. I recommend that you allow your friendly dog to interact with others *only* when the dogs are off-leash and in appropriate, safely enclosed areas.

■ **Defensive on leash.** This occurs with a dog who is mildly to significantly fearful of other dogs and feels threatened and trapped when he is on leash and approached by others.

Puppies may shut down at first when approached by other dogs, but as dogs mature and gain confidence, they may start to offer “distance increasing behaviors” including growls, barks, and lunges toward other dogs. When other dogs leave a barking, lunging dog alone in response to his “go away” message, the behavior is reinforced, and he's convinced this is a successful survival strategy. Behaviors that are reinforced generally increase, so the intensity of his aggressive behavior escalates over time.

As with frustrated greeters, this behavior is less likely to occur when the defensive dog is off leash, especially with a socially appropriate dog who respects his “go slow” signals. Because he knows he can move away and doesn't feel trapped by the leash, he is less stressed about the encounter, and less likely to feel the need to aggress.

■ **Offensively aggressive on leash.** Sadly, some dogs truly don't like other dogs and look for opportunities to attack them. This behavior can appear even in a young puppy and can be the most challenging to manage and modify of the three types of on-leash aggression.

While the other two types of leash-

aggressive dogs are often compatible with other dogs when *not* on their leashes, the offensively aggressive dog is generally just as much of a threat off leash as on leash. Fortunately, it's also the least common of the three types of leash-aggressive dogs.

## HOW TO MODIFY ON-LEASH AGGRESSION

All of the following protocols can be utilized with each of the three types of on-leash aggression described above.

■ **Counter-Conditioning and Desensitization (CC&D).** This is my favorite protocol for all three types of on-leash aggression, as it changes your dog's association with the stimulus (the other dog) that is creating an undesirable emotional response.

Working at a sub-threshold distance (where your dog is aware of the presence of the other dog but not barking, lunging, or otherwise acting aggressive), each time your dog looks at the other dog, you feed him a very high-value treat to convince him that other dogs make treats happen (see sidebar). Be patient, this modification protocol takes time!

■ **Constructional Aggression Treatment (CAT).** This is a more complicated protocol than CC&D,

because you need the help of another person and dog, but it can be very effective. The dog with aggressive behavior is exposed to another dog/handler pair at a sub-threshold distance, and any calm choices he makes (turning away, looking at his handler, looking at the other dog calmly, etc.) are reinforced by having the other dog/handler pair move away.

This shows your dog that a calm, non-aggressive behavior can make the unwanted dog go away. When your dog's calm behavior is consistently reinforced by moving the other dog away, your dog learns to behave calmly in the presence of other dogs – and eventually no longer feels the need to try to *make* them go away.

A reverse CAT procedure is used for frustrated greeters: calm behavior makes the other dog come closer.

For more information about CAT, see “Constructional Aggression Treatment Can Improve Behavior,” WDJ December 2009.

■ **Simple operant behaviors.** Teaching these easy operant behaviors can help you manage his behavior in the presence of other dogs. Because these are fun, they not only help him be attentive to you, but also put his brain in a happy place so he is less stressed about the other dogs. These include:

- **Touch:** Your dog cheerfully touches his nose to your hand on cue. (See “On Target Training,” September 2021.)
- **Walk Away:** Your dog does a 180-degree spin and romps away from the other dog when you give a “Walk Away” cue. (See “Walk Away,” September 2018.)
- **Find It:** Your dog gleefully runs to you and looks on the ground between your feet for treats when you use your “Find it” cue. If you already use “Find it” to look for things a distance away from you, use “Feet” for this one. (See “Understanding Your Dog's Nose,” September 2019.)

## ON-LEASH SUCCESS

Some leash-aggressive dogs may never be candidates for dog park play, but with commitment to management and a good modification program (with the help of a qualified force-free professional if needed), you should be able to enjoy the peaceful walks that you were hoping for when you first adopted him. 🐾

*Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ's Training Editor and the owner of Peaceable Paws Dog & Puppy Training.*

## Counter-Conditioning and Desensitization (CC&D)

Here's how you can use CC&D to improve how your dog feels, and eventually behaves, around other dogs on leash:

**1** Determine the distance at which your dog can be in the presence of another dog and be alert or wary but not aggressive. This is the sub-threshold distance.

**2** Have your dog on leash where other dogs will occasionally pass by at a sub-threshold distance. The instant your dog sees the other dog, start feeding bits of chicken (or another high-value treat). Let him look and then feed him treats. Look again; feed. Over and over.

**3** The moment that the other dog is out of sight, *stop* feeding treats to your dog. The treats appear again only when your dog notices another dog's appearance.

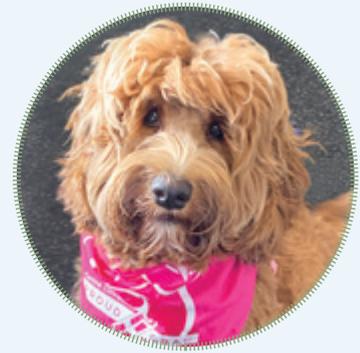
**4** Repeat steps 1-3 until seeing a dog at that distance consistently causes your dog to look at you with a “Yay! Where's my chicken?” expression. This is a conditioned

emotional response (CER); your dog's association with a dog at threshold distance is now positive instead of negative.

**5** Gradually move your dog closer to where other dogs will appear, achieving the CER at each new distance, until your dog can happily and calmly be near other dogs.

**6** At your original threshold distance, do CC&D where more dogs will be present and more active – perhaps outside a dog park or outdoor training class. Gradually decrease distance, attaining CERs, until your dog is delighted to have more dogs and more activity in close proximity.

**7** When your dog remains calm around other dogs in controlled environments, you're ready for real-world encounters. Take him for walks in your neighborhood, using generous CC&D treats any time he sees another dog. Continue to manage the situation by moving away as needed, until you are confident he can pass by other dogs without reacting.



## What's ahead...

- ▶ **Canine Acupuncture**  
The best uses for this complementary healthcare modality.
- ▶ **Noise Phobia**  
Phobias are more than just fear; your dog may act afraid even when the dreaded noise is not present.
- ▶ **Should You Remove Dewclaws? Or Not?**  
The controversy over surgical removal of these vestigial appendages.
- ▶ **Bacterial Folliculitis**  
A guide to treating the most common infections of the skin.
- ▶ **Should You Consider Board & Training?**  
What to know before you send your dog off to a training boot camp.
- ▶ **Preventing Kennel Cough**  
How often should you vaccinate for Bordetella? Is over-vaccination for this possible?
- ▶ **When Dogs Attack**  
What you can do if you and your dog are attacked by an off-leash or stray dog – and what you need to do after you are both safe.
- ▶ **Health Insurance Update**  
Guidance for buying the kind of pet insurance you are likely to need.

**YOUR RENEWAL  
IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!**  
[Whole-Dog-Journal.com](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com)

Visit our website at:  
[Whole-Dog-Journal.com](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com)

To change your mailing or e-mail address, renew your subscription, check payment status, or ask questions about your account, visit us at: [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/cs](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/cs) or call (800) 829-9165.

Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

# Whole Dog Journal™

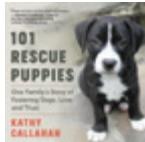
## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

#### *101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust*

by Kathy Callahan

This photo-filled book features the wonderful stories that emerged as more than 100 foster pups were suddenly surrounded by a nurturing family complete with patient adult dogs and curious cats. Available from [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products)



**WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller** is author of many books on force-free, pain-free, fear-free training, including:

#### *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*

*How to Foster Dogs*

*Play With Your Dog*

*Positive Perspectives 2:*

*Love Your Dog, Train your Dog*



#### *Beware of the Dog: Positive Solutions for Aggressive Behavior in Dogs*

All of these are available from [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products)



#### *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats,*

by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products)



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

**Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA, FDM**  
Alexandria, VA. [puppypicks.com](http://puppypicks.com)

Kathy is a regular contributor to WDJ and the author of the book *101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust*. She's a Certified Professional Dog Trainer who specializes in puppyhood coaching and private training, in person and over Zoom or Facetime.

**Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA**  
Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training  
Fairplay, MD. (301) 582-9420;  
[peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)

Group and private training, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become "Pat Miller Certified Trainers" (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat's Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior), Level 2 (Behavior Modification), and any third Peaceable Paws Academy Course.