

Adult Wolfdog Nutrition

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What food should I be feeding my Wolfdog?

This is a question that we have all asked at least once. When involved with Wolfdog Education, I lost count of how many times I was asked this. It is a very good question to be asking. Nutrition is a very important factor in Wolfdog health and behavior. Unfortunately there is no single good answer to this question.

R individual Wolfdogs have different make ups and nutritional needs. **C** Wolfdogs are a very special kind of Canine. They are large, athletic, and intelligent. They need a good nutritious diet packed full of proteins, vitamins, minerals, & energy. Hopefully this will help guide you to the right choice for you and your special friend.

1. **Store bought foods**

These would include packaged foods purchased at your local grocery, feed, supply, pet, and discount, stores. This category will include dry foods (kibble) and canned foods. The first thing to look for is whether or not the food is AAFCO approved and if there are any recalls on it. The AAFCO approval will be printed on the label if it is an approved food. AAFCO is the Association of American Feed Control Officials. The purpose of AAFCO is to establish and maintain an Association through which officials of any state, dominion, federal or other governmental agency and employees thereof charged with a responsibility in enforcing the laws regulating the production, labeling, distribution, or sale of animal feeds or livestock. More information can be found at <http://www.aaftco.org/> A list of recalled foods can be found at the following. <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/7/alerts.html>. <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html>

Next you will want to decide on dry bagged food vs canned wet food. Keep in mind that canned food contains more water and therefore you may not be getting the best value for your money. Another consideration to keep in mind is good dental health. Canned food has been associated with more dental issues in canines than dry kibble.

After deciding on the type the next decision to be made is the brand name and brand formula. This is by far the toughest decision. This will involve some research and even some trial periods. You will have to look at ingredients, protein and fat levels, and maybe even do a little math to ensure this is the best product and value for your pet. Start with the protein and fat levels in the food you are looking at. Wolfdogs are very active canines and should be well

muscle. To maintain this energy and muscle the food should have a protein level above 20% and a fat level above 12%.

Ingredients are important factor to consider as well. Good quality foods will use high quality ingredients. One of the more important ingredients would be the base of what the food is made from. This will be listed as the first and second ingredient on the label. Higher quality foods will use meat where as lower quality foods will use more corn, wheat, and soy. These items are used in dog food to keep costs down. Some dogs do not react well to corn, wheat, and soy and then there are some that do. There are also toxin and allergen concerns associated with these ingredients. Recently some foods have been recalled due to these ingredient related toxins. I personally try to avoid these ingredients as much as possible. More ingredients to look at are meat by products and meals. These are less costly items but also valuable in nutrition. Meals use the flesh and bone of the meat listed. By products use the organs of the meat listed. Though this sounds bad it is very high in nutrition. Other important ingredients are vitamins and minerals. The more the better. These are as important to Canine health as our own.

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Past all of the research it is really up to the individual dog on how it reacts to the food you have chosen. A trial period of about 3 weeks should be allowed. After this time the dog's skin quality should be good, they should be healthy, active, and their stool should be firm with no undigested particles. The following are manufacturer links to foods that other Wolfdog owners feed with good success. Most of these links will point you to local suppliers that carry their products. www.diamondpet.com (natural & performance lines), <http://www.nutro.co.uk/> (holistic, performance, meat & rice lines), <http://www.evopet.com/>, (most of the line up), <http://www.tasteofthewildpetfood.com/products/dogs/>, <http://www.chickensoupforthevetloverssoul.com/>, (adult large breed lineup), <http://www.solidgoldhealth.com/>, (barking at the moon line).

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Most prepackaged foods are studied independently by outside sources. Many of these results can be found at www.dogfoodreview.com

2. **Supplementing or Feeding Raw Foods**

Raw diets have been around a lot longer than most people think. There are two ways to feed raw foods to your Wolfdog. It can be supplemented into a diet that already consists of a food mentioned above or it can be fed exclusively. Exclusive feeding has been referred to as several things but the name most commonly used is BARF. BARF stands for Biologically Approved Raw Foods or Bones and Raw Foods. This diet can be extremely nutritious for your Wolfdog if fed and prepared correctly. It simulates their natural diet from the wild. Be aware that there are several versions and recipes for this type of diet. The correct raw only diet should contain raw meats, organs, bones, vegetables, fruits, and a host of vitamin, mineral, and other supplements.

Without all of these combinations your Wolfdog may not be getting the correct nutrition that they need. It can also be difficult to configure and prepare this combination on a daily basis. This is why many people shy away from this type of diet or purchase it prepackaged. This type of diet should be researched thoroughly before being tried. Included is a starter link to a prepackaged version of this. The ingredients can be purchased and mixed at home if you desire. <http://www.barfworld.com/>

Raw foods can be supplemented into an already existing diet with great results. If you have chosen a dry bagged kibble for example, bones, meat and other raw items can be given on top of this. The reason for this is to increase the nutrients that your Wolfdog is getting without the hassle of configuring or preparing an extensive menu. Fresh raw meats and bones are ok to feed your Wolfdog. Though there are some vets that will cringe at this, it simulates their natural diet and can be perfectly healthy for them. . There are just a few things to remember. Never give any dog cooked bones. Cooked bones can splinter and cause serious damage to the digestive tract. Always supervise your Wolfdog when they are given bones to eliminate choking hazards. Avoid small and sharp bones. Some types of fruits and vegetables can be fed as well with good healthy results. There are some fruits and vegetables to avoid as they are potentially toxic to canines. Here is one list of some toxic items to canines <http://www.acreaturecomfort.com/toxic.htm>. Please research these items further before feeding them to your Wolfdog. Most of your raw foods and bones can be purchased at your local grocery store or butcher shop.

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3. **Vitamins, Minerals, & Other Supplements**

Adding these items to your dog's regular diet can add years to their life as well as make them happier and healthier. Have you gone in a nature store or the vitamin aisle lately? There are too many on the shelves to count. So what kinds should you be feeding? This really depends on many factors like the Wolfdog's health, activity level, age, ect. Many of the same supplements we take for the same reasons we take them are also effective on dogs. Dosages should be carefully watched and discussed with your vet prior to giving any type of supplement. Here are a few listings that myself and other Wolfdog owners have had great results with. Multivitamin, Vitamin C, Vitamin B Complex, Vitamin E, Glucosamine, Chondroitin, Calcium, Yogurt, Salmon Oil, Vitamin D, Vitamin K. Most of these can be purchased at your local grocery store or nature outlet. Included is a link to help you better understand what some of these supplements do for your Wolfdog. <http://www.vitamins-nutrition.org/vitamins/vitamins-dog.html> .

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4. **Treats**

Treats are an essential tool for bonding, training and just letting your Wolfdog know how good they are being. Treats to canines can be similar to our junk food so we should watch what and how much is being given. Many treats come prepackaged specifically for dogs. Keep a close eye on the

ingredients to these. Some contain ingredients listed in part 1 that have been linked to toxins and recalls. Others have little or no nutritional value. Some owners choose other treats due to these issues. Other treats can include hotdogs, meatballs, bacon, sliced deli meat, vegetables, fruits, bones, and more. Select a treat based on your activity. If you are training, you want smaller, tasty, quickly chewed portions. If you are just spoiling and showing love, you may want something that takes a little more time to devour.

Nutrition is a very important factor in Wolfdog behavior, development, and health. Hopefully the information contained here will help guide you in your search for the perfect diet for your special canine.

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