



A Closer Look at Purina Pro Plan Advantedge

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Purina is widely considered the #1 in dog food sales in the U.S. Let's take a closer look at what's actually in their dog's food—and what each ingredient contributes to the overall diet. Brands like Purina Pro Plan are formulated to meet nutritional standards established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials. These standards define what it means for a food to be complete and balanced, helping ensure it provides the essential nutrients dogs need at different life stages.

Learning more about dog food ingredients can help pet owners better understand how different foods are formulated and evaluate which options align with their preferences and their dog's needs. Not all dog foods are the same—differences in ingredient composition, processing methods, and formulation approaches can influence how a food is evaluated and how it fits into an individual dog's diet.

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. This list reflects the composition of the food before and during processing, which may include both raw and processed forms of ingredients.

INGREDIENTS: Chicken, poultry by-product meal, rice, soybean meal, whole grain corn, corn protein meal, whole grain wheat, corn germ meal, vegetable oil (source of medium-chain triglycerides), natural flavor, barley, fish meal, dried egg product, fish oil, glycerin, calcium carbonate, L-Arginine, soybean oil, dried whey protein concentrate, mono and dicalcium phosphate, salt, **VITAMINS** [Vitamin E supplement, thiamine mononitrate (Vitamin B-1), niacin (Vitamin B-3), Vitamin A supplement, calcium pantothenate (Vitamin B-5), riboflavin supplement (Vitamin B-2), Vitamin B-12 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride (Vitamin B-6), folic acid (Vitamin B-9), menadione sodium bisulfite complex (Vitamin K), biotin (Vitamin B-7), Vitamin D-3 supplement], potassium chloride, DL-Methionine, choline chloride, **MINERALS** [zinc sulfate, ferrous sulfate, zinc proteinate, manganese sulfate, manganese proteinate, copper sulfate, copper proteinate, calcium iodate, sodium selenite], glycine, L-Cysteine, L-ascorbyl-2-polyphosphate (Vitamin C), dried *Bacillus coagulans* fermentation product, garlic oil, dried *Lactobacillus fermentum* fermentation product, dried *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* fermentation product.

Below is a breakdown of the ingredients in one of their chicken-based formulas, along with each ingredient's function in the diet.

Primary Ingredients (by weight)

Chicken

What it is: Whole chicken, including muscle tissue, skin, and water

Purpose: Primary source of animal protein and essential amino acids

Note: Water is reduced during the kibble manufacturing process, which concentrates nutrients

Poultry by-product meal

What it is: Rendered poultry tissues such as organ meat and bone, excluding feathers

Purpose: Concentrated source of protein and minerals such as calcium and phosphorus

Note: By-products are defined by AAFCO and can contribute valuable nutrients depending on sourcing and processing

Rice

What it is: Refined grain carbohydrate

Purpose: Provides digestible energy

Note: Commonly used and generally well tolerated by many dogs

Soybean meal

What it is: Defatted soybean product

Purpose: Plant-based protein source that contributes to the overall amino acid profile

Note: Used in many formulations to help meet protein requirements

Whole grain corn / corn protein meal / corn germ meal

What it is: Different components of corn used for carbohydrate and protein content

Purpose: Provide energy, protein, and additional nutrients

Note: These ingredients contribute to the overall nutrient profile of the diet

Whole grain wheat

What it is: Whole wheat grain

Purpose: Provides carbohydrates and fiber

Note: Included to support energy needs and dietary structure; wheat may not be suitable for dogs with specific sensitivities

Fats & Flavor

Vegetable oil (MCT source)

Purpose: Provides fat and energy; may support certain physiological functions depending on fatty acid composition

Fish oil

Purpose: Source of omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA), which support skin, coat, and overall health

Natural flavor

What it is: Flavoring derived from animal or plant sources

Purpose: Improves palatability and encourages acceptance of the food

Protein & Nutrient Additions

Fish meal

Purpose: Concentrated source of protein and fatty acids

Dried egg product

Purpose: Highly digestible source of complete protein

Dried whey protein concentrate

Purpose: Additional protein source that contributes to amino acid content and palatability

Amino acids (L-Arginine, DL-Methionine, Glycine, L-Cysteine)

Purpose: Help ensure the food meets the full amino acid requirements for dogs

Note: Added to support nutritional completeness, particularly in formulations that include both animal and plant protein sources

Vitamins & Minerals

Vitamins Includes vitamins A, D, E, K, and B-complex

Purpose: Support a wide range of biological functions and help ensure the diet meets established nutrient requirements

Minerals

Includes zinc, iron, copper, manganese, iodine, and selenium

Purpose: Support functions such as oxygen transport, immune function, metabolism, and thyroid health

Functional Ingredients

Probiotics (e.g., *Bacillus coagulans*, *Lactobacillus* species)

Purpose: Support gut microbiome health

Note: Effectiveness can vary depending on processing and storage conditions

Glycerin

Purpose: Helps maintain texture and moisture, and improves palatability

Electrolytes and mineral sources

(potassium chloride, calcium carbonate, phosphorus sources)

Purpose: Support electrolyte balance and bone health

Garlic oil

Purpose: Used in very small amounts for flavoring

Note: Included at levels considered safe within complete and balanced formulations

Key Takeaways

All complete and balanced dog foods are formulated to meet established nutritional standards.

Ingredient lists indicate the components of a food but do not fully represent nutrient digestibility or bioavailability.

Ingredients work together within a complete formulation to meet a dog's overall nutritional needs, and some brands emphasize ingredient selection as part of their quality standards.

Pet owners may prioritize different factors when evaluating dog food, including ingredient composition, formulation approach, and brand philosophy.

Assessment

Positives

- Includes a combination of animal and plant-based protein sources to help meet amino acid requirements
- Formulated to meet complete and balanced nutrition standards
- Includes omega-3 fatty acids and other functional ingredients
- Developed by a large team of veterinary nutritionists and scientists

Context to Consider

- Like many dry dog foods, it contains a mix of ingredient types that work together to meet nutritional targets
- Ingredient lists alone do not fully reflect nutrient bioavailability or digestibility, which are evaluated during formulation and testing

Simple Translation

This is a complete and balanced dog food formulated to meet established nutritional standards and provide broad accessibility. It uses a combination of animal and plant-based ingredients, along with added vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, to help ensure the final product meets required nutritional guidelines. Different pet owners may prioritize different factors when evaluating dog food, including ingredient composition, formulation approach, and brand practices.

Purina Pro Plan is formulated by a team of over 500 scientists, including board-certified veterinary nutritionists (DACVIM), veterinarians, and PhD nutritionists. These experts develop diets for a variety of health needs and life stages, ensuring the products are designed to meet established standards such as those set by the Association of American Feed Control Officials ([AAFCO](#)) and referenced by guidelines from the World Small Animal Veterinary Association ([WSAVA](#)). See also [Truth about Pet Food](#).

This article is intended to help you better understand dog food labels and ingredients to make more informed choices. Content on HereRicky is for informational purposes and is not a substitute for veterinary advice. We do not endorse specific brands, diets, or recipes. However, we may “feature” responsible dog food brands created by Licensed Board-Certified Veterinary Nutritionists, and Veterinarians. Not all dog foods are created equal. Our goal is to provide clarity, through information, resources, to help you evaluate your options. Learn more. Follow us. Visit [HereRicky.com](#). Subscription free. No login. No email. No sharing of private information. No spam. Just food clarity for those you love.