

Is Bakers and Pedigree Dog Food Fit For Purpose? You Decide



Bakers and Pedigree Complete Dog Food- Are These Top Selling Brands Really Bad?

Behavioural Problems: As a dog behaviourist I see many dogs that are showing signs of behavioural abnormalities. Some of those problems can be caused by what we give the dogs to eat. We are all aware what happens with our children if we feed them food full of additives, colourants and E numbers.

Why do we imagine it is not the same for our dogs? When I get a call from a potential client, and they list behavioural abnormalities. Like hyperactivity, aggression, inability to concentrate, low attention span, and in some cases aggression. Then there are two questions I always ask.



Is the dog is neutered, at what age and what are you feeding the dog:

The neutering I cannot change, and the fact it may have been neutered too early gives me an insight into why the dog was having behavioural problems.. Though I can still work with the dog and get a fairly successful outcome. Early neutering can cause a number of physical and behaviour problems that can include the list of behaviours I have mentioned above. For a full rundown on some of the pitfalls of neutering see my Article. [Neutering In Depth](#)

Dog Food and Behaviour: If they are feeding their dog on food which may have lots of additives and preservatives. Then my first recommendation would be to see what happens if they change the dog food. If there is isn't a marked change in behaviour after two weeks, then I tell them to call me back.

Strangely enough, not that many call me back.

Except perhaps, to tell me that a miraculous change has occurred. Bakers Complete dog food is made by Purina. And is their flagship brand, that is advertised everywhere. Walk into almost any local supermarket; you will see the shelves stocked high with the brilliantly branded blue bags. It is a great pity that their branding is not a reflection of the ingredients found inside.

I also believe the Supermarkets like Sainsburys and Tesco's should understand the ingredients of the dog food they are stocking. Or does profit come before welfare? Open the packet and what do you see? Lovely bright colours and shapes. It looks like peas and carrots and meat. Amazing! You could almost imagine it was made in Sellafield. It looks as though it could glow in the dark. So why have Purina added all the shapes and colours? Dogs are red a green colour blind, and see colours in a pastel washed out shade. Therefore to dogs the colour is meaningless. Especially as they decide on what they like mainly by smell.



It is patently obvious to me that the colours and shapes are there to attract the owners to buy this brand, simply because it looks so full of goodness. It appears that Purina are very good at marketing. This is the best selling dog food on the market by far. What truly amazes me is **WHY?** With contents that include unnamed cereals, meat derivatives, sugars, fats vegetable derivatives, colours, antioxidants, and preservatives. The meat content is around the legal **minimum** required by legislation. How can Purina describe this as a good wholesome food, dogglycious and nutritionally balanced, is beyond me. Do dogs like Bakers? They love it. Why? There is a very simple answer 'Oils fats' and 'various sugars'. These are ingredients added as taste enhancers. But like having them in our own diet, they do us no favours.

Sugar and fat are very popular with dogs; unfortunately they are also inked to numerous health problems. There is a well respected [independant dog food analysis](#) website, that states (4) *"This food receives a 1-star rating simply because there is nothing lower"* They go on to say. *"We cannot comprehend feeding a dog on cereals and derivatives"* and *"the food does nothing to decrease our horror at feeding this food to a canine.* Pretty damning stuff. The remainder of the review is no less scathing of Purina and their flagship product.

E-Numbers: What about E numbers? We all know that they can cause certain behavioural and medical problems. At the time of writing I believe there are 13 E-numbers in Bakers complete dog food. If this is correct, then that is an awful lot of Es. To put this into perspective, the oft maligned McDonalds hamburger contains 7 E-numbers Ten of these E numbers in Bakers have been flagged as causes of concern at different levels.

Additives and Preservatives: These E numbers are used for a variety of purposes, such as colourings and preservatives, this list includes:



- Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) - **E320**
- Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT) - **E321**
- Propyl Gallate - **E310**
- Citric Acid - **E330**
- Potassium Sorbate -, **E202**
- Propan -1,2-diol - **E490**
- Iron Oxide - **E172**
- Indigo Carmine - **E132**
- Tartrazine - **E102**
- Sunset Yellow - **E110**
- Quinoline Yellow - **E104**
- Titanium Dioxide - **E171**
- Carbon Black - **E153**

At the time of writing I believe the ten below are still used in the preparation of Bakers Complete.

E320 - has been found to be tumour-producing when fed to rats. In human studies it has been linked with urticaria, angioedema and asthma.

E321 - banned for use in food in Japan, Romania, Sweden, and Australia. The US has barred it from being used in infant foods. So bad McDonalds have voluntarily eliminated it from their products.

E310 - Banned from children's foods in the US because it is thought to cause the blood disorder methemoglobinemia

E172 - Banned in Germany

E132 - Can cause skin sensitivity, a rash similar to nettle rash, itching, nausea, high blood pressure and breathing problems. One of the colours that the Hyperactive Children's Support Group recommends be eliminated from the diet of children. Banned in Norway.



E102 - TARTRAZINE - A trial on 76 children diagnosed as hyperactive, showed that tartrazine provoked abnormal behaviour patterns in 79% of them

E110 - Sunset Yellow has been found to damage kidneys and adrenals when fed to laboratory rats. It has also been found to be carcinogenic when fed to animals

E104 - One of the colours that the Hyperactive Children's Support Group recommends be eliminated from the diet of children. Banned in Australia, Japan, Norway and the United States.

E171 - Banned in Germany

E153 - Banned as a food additive in the United States of America. Suspected as a carcinogenic agent.

Reports by dog owners of aggression, hyperactivity, itchy skin, cancer and other health related problems. Which they believe was caused by feeding their dogs certain dog foods, have been around for many years.

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(1) The first ingredient on the Bakers Complete dog food label is a carbohydrate in the form of 'cereals'. 'Cereals' is a general term for all kinds of grains. By using the term cereals on the label, the manufacturer can use whatever grain is cheapest at the time. This is usually used with the manufacturer's profit margin in mind as opposed to the quality of food for your pet. Cereals are also a common bulking agent. The protein in Bakers Complete is in the form of meat and animal derivatives. This sounds low quality protein as it comes from the less desirable parts of an animal such as the feet and guts. It uses the minimum level of protein. It is recommended by nutritionists to provide a higher level of protein in your dog's diet than Bakers currently provide. It contains various sugars. It actually contains more sugar than most dog foods on the market.

Although sugar is vital to your dog's health, too much sugar is obviously very bad. The level of sugar in Bakers could explain the complaints of hyperactivity from some dog owners. Bakers also include unspecified artificial preservatives and antioxidants - another group of ingredients that the majority of nutritional experts recommend avoiding, due to their links to health problems.



With all low grade foods, the amount you feed to get a reasonable amount of nutrients in your dog is quite high. That suggests that a bag will not last very long. Therefore the price per day goes up considerably. In fact, Bakers could cost about as much per day as many higher quality dog foods. I feel it is important to state that Bakers is not the only dog food that uses E numbers, animal derivatives, and unspecified ingredients. Another leading brand that comes to mind is Pedigree, which also uses bulking agents, like cereals, and animal meat derivatives, antioxidants, artificial colourings, and preservatives. Pedigree also got a 01 out of 5 rating on the Which Dog Food website.

In the site Dog Food Advisor, they have stated the following:

"The first ingredient in Pedigree dog food is corn. Corn is an inexpensive and controversial cereal grain. And aside from its energy content, this grain is of only modest nutritional value to a dog. For this reason, we do not consider corn a preferred component in any dog food."

"The second ingredient is corn gluten meal. Gluten is the rubbery residue remaining once corn has had most of its starchy carbohydrate washed out of it."

"Compared to meat, glutens are inferior grain-based proteins lower in some of the essential amino acids dogs need for life. This inexpensive plant-based ingredient can significantly boost the total protein reported on the label — a factor that must be considered when judging the actual meat content of this dog food."

"The third ingredient is poultry by-product meal, a dry rendered product of slaughterhouse waste. It's made from what's left of slaughtered poultry after all the prime cuts have been removed."

"In addition to organs (the nourishing part), this stuff can contain almost anything — feet, beaks, undeveloped eggs — anything except quality skeletal muscle (real meat)".

Look carefully at the labels of any dog food you feed your dogs. Though the problems with labelling like Bakers. There are often unspecified ingredients, so we do not get anywhere near the whole picture. There are 350+ reviews and many concerns regarding Pedigree on this one site alone. [Consumer Affairs](#). Not a good advertisement for one of the largest sellers of dog food on the market. On the [Dog FoodAnalysis](#) site they state *"Overall this is one of the lowest quality products reviewed on this site. It receives a 1* rating due to the unavailability of anything lower"* Says it all really.

I believe the law should be changed, so we as the purchaser know exactly what is going into many of today's dog food. Some of these dog foods could be doing more harm than good. I wrote an article on [Dog Food and Behaviour](#) where it lists the best food manufacturers. after testing them on my dogs over a 14 month period. This was of course not a laboratory survey. Look out for the following and avoid - Low meat content, Artificial additives, Unclear labelling, By-products/derivatives



In Conclusion

There are numerous brands of pet food. Many purport to be hypoallergenic, wholesome, and the best money can buy. Unfortunately the advertising hype does not always stand up to close scrutiny. Always read the labels and check online to see if there are any articles or recommendation for your brand of dog food. Do not take anything at face value.

There is another area that can cause severe behavioural and medical problems, [Annual Vaccinations](#). This a national disgrace and must be stopped for the sake of our dogs health.