



East Island Animal Hospital
東 區 動 物 醫 院

Nutrition and Healthy Eating for Dogs.

A dog should always be fed a diet suitable for his or her life stage.

- After being weaned from the mother, dogs are generally fed a puppy food.
- At around 9-12 months of age, they should switch to an adult dog food
- At around 7-10 years of age, dogs usually change to being fed a diet designed for senior animals
- Special diets, including prescription medical diets, are also sometimes recommended depending on a pet's individual needs.

Diets can either be commercial (available as dry or canned food from vets, pet stores or supermarkets), or home made. Often owners will feed their dog a combination of commercial and home-made food.

High quality commercial diets are generally nutritionally complete and balanced, containing all necessary vitamins and minerals.

- They are formulated specifically for the life stage (puppy, adult, senior), and size (toy and small breed, standard, or large and giant breed) of the dog.
- Dry (kibble or biscuit) food is nutritionally similar to canned food, but is usually more economical, cleaner and encourages better dental development.
- Dry food is recommended to be the major component of most pets diets.
- The quality of the food is also important, and there are significant differences between the lower priced budget food and the premium range food.
- Calcium should never be supplemented to a balanced dog food.

Home-made diets are also an excellent choice for feeding your dog, as long as the diet is made to a specific recipe and is nutritionally complete.

- Home-made diets are often much more difficult to formulate and cook, and are usually more expensive than a commercial diet.
- However, a number of vets and dog owners believe that a well made home-cooked diet can provide a higher level of anti-oxidants and allow the dog to live a more natural lifestyle.
- It is very important to ensure that all necessary minerals and vitamins are present in the correct amounts and ratios when formulating a home-made diet. An unbalanced diet can result in poor immunity, lower energy levels or poor overall health.
- Note that plain meat or meat and rice (even with vitamin supplements) is not a complete or balanced diet.

Your dog should also be given occasional treats, such as dog chews, raw bones or raw whole chicken wings. Cooked bones can splinter and should not be fed. Other foods that dogs should never be fed include chocolate, coffee, tea, onions, large amounts of garlic, sultanas or any food that may cause a blockage such as mango seeds or corn cobs. Also, dogs should not be given human medications or supplements.

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