

FEEDING YOUR DOG



Beaconsfield

Veterinary Centre

Dr Steve Wait B.V.Sc and Associates

14 Wood Street Beaconsfield, Victoria 3807

Telephone: (03) 9769 8777 (24hr contact)

www.beaconsfieldvet.com.au

What should I feed my new puppy?

The first rule about feeding pups is that there shouldn't be a sudden change to their diet. New foods can cause diarrhoea and so you will need to add them in gradually over a five day period.

It is important that puppies are fed a puppy food until approximately twelve months of age (this varies depending on the breed). Their nutritional needs while growing are very specific, and an adult dog food will not supply an adequate balance of nutrients, potentially causing deficiencies and disease.

There are some fantastic commercial puppy foods available, and anything with the words "complete and balanced" written somewhere on the label will have everything in it that your puppy needs. It is very hard to achieve the same results with a home cooked diet.

Does my puppy need to be fed milk and table scraps?

After they have been weaned from their mother, puppies do not have a nutritional requirement for milk.

Most dogs have trouble digesting cow's milk and it can cause diarrhoea. If you would like to give your pup some milk as a treat that is fine, but make sure that you purchase the low lactose pet milk. It is not a problem to add table scraps to your pup's food as long as at least 75% of his meals are made from a complete and balanced puppy food.

Should I be adding calcium to my pup's food?

As long as you are feeding your puppy with a quality, complete puppy food there is absolutely no need to add extra calcium. In fact adding calcium can cause problems because it is the balance between the minerals that is very important and not just the amounts. Adding extra calcium can tip the balance.

What should I feed my dog?

Dogs have very specific nutritional needs depending on their age, activity levels, breed and state of health.

Puppies - Puppy food until 9 to 12 months of age.

1 to 7 years - Adult dog food

Lactating bitches - Puppy food

Prone to obesity - Low calorie food

Breeds over 30kg - Large breed food

Dogs over 7 years - Senior diet

Very energetic dogs - High calorie food

Health problems - A range of prescription diets are available

Whatever your dog's life stage it is important to check on the packaging of the food that it mentions the words "complete and balanced".

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Isn't a home cooked diet the very best thing for my dog?

It is extremely hard to provide everything that your dog needs in the right balance with a home cooked diet. Commercial diets are highly scientifically researched to provide exactly what your dog needs, and are the best option. It is fine to feed your dog table scraps as an extra, as long as the majority of the diet consists of a complete and balanced food.

Is dry or tinned food the best for my dog?

This comes down to personal choice. Dry food is usually the easier and cheaper option, and as long as it is a balanced food there is nothing wrong with feeding your dog with only dry food. Some people prefer tinned and some give a combination of the two. Either way is fine.

My dog is very fussy and won't eat dog food

Sometimes our dogs can be very good at training us into giving them only the most choice titbits eg our food, steak or chicken etc. If they refuse to eat dog food then you must persevere and stop giving them the treats. Unfortunately a dog fed only with meat will eventually develop nutritional problems. If you are having this trouble with your dog please get in touch with us so that we can help you to get their diet back on the right track.

What about bones?

Bones are important for the prevention of dental disease. Feed your dog a raw bone once a week and tailor the size of the bone to the size of the dog. Give them a nice big bone that they have to chew on. It should not be small enough for them to swallow whole. The key word here is raw. NEVER give your dog cooked bones as they cannot digest them properly. This can lead to all sorts of complications if the bone gets stuck in the digestive system, and this can be life threatening.

And of course, fresh water should be available at all times.

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