

The Dog Feeding Dilemma: What Kind and How Much?

You've just brought your new dog or puppy home. Now, what do you feed it?

Just like humans, dogs need good nutrition to keep them happy and healthy. Most veterinarians recommend dry dog food over canned food. It has been determined that dry food has more nutritional value than canned food. This is because canned food is usually about 70% liquid. So, your dog has to eat more to get the same nutrition as dry.

Some brands of canned dog food are beef or chicken based and can be adequate for small dogs. Dogs that weigh over 30 pounds should be fed dry food for most meals. Use canned foods too so that your pet feels that his hunger is being satisfied. Sometimes you can mix water or broth with dry food so that your dog feels he is getting something special.

So, how much food should you give and how often should your puppy be fed?

Puppies that are six weeks old or younger should be given milk seven to ten times during the day - and night. Your puppy will let you know when it is hungry by yipping or whining.

You can start feeding your puppy a little solid food when it reaches four weeks of age. Give your puppy very small amounts to begin with. If she gets sick or has diarrhea, wait a few days and then try again...perhaps with a different brand.

As your puppy gets older, the feeding times can be reduced to several times a day. This usually occurs at about eight to ten weeks old. This timetable can vary according to the breed of dog that you have. If your puppy whines at his feeding dish, go ahead and give him a bit more food.

Puppies that are three to six months old will be teething and will need something else to chew on. Chew bones and hanks of rope are good for puppy chewing toys. Puppies should be getting some dry dog food by this time as well. Remember that puppies of these ages are still growing so will have to have adequate nutrition in their "puppy" food.

When your puppy reaches one year old, she is considered a fully adult dog. You should feed her adult dog food twice a day.

Female dogs that are pregnant will need additional nutrients. She may require an additional feeding during the day. Your veterinarian might recommend vitamins to keep her and her puppies healthy.

A dog that is sick will probably lose his appetite. Don't force him to eat; he will eat when he's feeling better. Consult your vet if you think he's not getting enough nourishment.

Older dogs might not want to eat as much as they did when younger. This is normal and nothing to be concerned about because their activity level is lower than when they were young dogs.

A word about table scraps: please don't. Yes, they do love them, but many pets die from disease caused by the wrong kinds of foods.

Use common sense when feeding your dog and your dog will do fine.

About the Author

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