



Dog and Cat Nutrition

Their foundation for good health

Just like with people, proper nutrition can help pets stay healthier and live longer. It can even help prevent or manage certain diseases. A good diet is an easy (and tasty) way to manage your pet's health.

Providing good nourishment:

- **Feed a high quality diet** that is suitable for your pet's life stage and always offer fresh, clean water.
- **They are what they eat!** Bright eyes, an energetic attitude, proper body condition and a shiny coat are all signs of good nutrition.
- **Discuss your pet's nutritional plan with us** We can advise on the many healthy diets available.

Youngsters need to eat more often than older pets. Several small meals a day are best.

Do not feed table food to your pet.

He or she could end up eating a less properly balanced diet!

VCA
Pet Tips:

Questions & Answers

Are there any pet foods that promote healthy teeth?

Yes. Dental diets can actually decrease the accumulation of plaque on your pet's teeth, helping to keep teeth and gums clean and healthy. Ask your veterinarian for advice.

My cat's a finicky eater. How can I get her to eat right?

Some pets prefer a particular taste or texture to their food. Try a different kibble size or meal formulation such as chicken, rather than beef, tuna, rather than sardines.

Is it better to feed pets canned or dry food?

Either choice is fine, but many veterinarians recommend a mix of both for optimal palatability.



VCA
Animal Hospitals

VCA 159 QC (06/2010)

Learn more at VCAHOSPITALS.COM
or call 1-800-VCA-PETS (822-7387)

Exceptional Pet Healthcare

Dog and Cat Nutrition

Good nutrition = Good health



A high-quality diet will provide your pet with the correct balance of essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients needed for optimum health. He or she will benefit in many ways – from a shinier coat to a boosted immune system.

Feeding your youngster (up to 12 months)

Puppies and kittens need a diet formulated for accelerated growth. A growth diet will help develop strong muscles, bones and teeth. The higher levels of protein and other nutrients provide the “building blocks” needed for this life stage.

Puppies’ nutritional needs can vary by breed. Underfeeding or overfeeding can lead to health problems. With kittens, it is very important to make sure they eat their own food and don’t snack on the food of other household pets.

We will help you map out a complete nutritional plan for your pet.

Feeding your adult pet (years 1-6)

Animals’ nutritional needs taper off as they enter adulthood.

Dogs are *omnivores*, meaning that they can eat vegetable matter and grains as well as meat, but they do require a significant amount of protein in their diet.

Cats, on the other hand, are true *carnivores* and require even more protein. Cats cannot produce the essential amino acid taurine (found in eggs, fish, meat and milk), and, as a result, need a supplemented diet in order to stay healthy.

Feeding your senior pet (years 7+)

All pets age differently, so the decision to start your pet on a senior diet should be made carefully.

Senior diets offer:

- **Antioxidant blends** to help boost your aging pet’s immune system and improve age-related cognitive (brain) behavioral changes.
- **Joint supplements** that can help manage arthritic ailments.
- **Special formulations** that are easier on sensitive senior digestive and urinary systems.

Body weight often becomes an issue in older animals. Specially formulated diets can help with both obese and underweight pets.

Foods that fight disease

Because of better nutrition and advanced veterinary care, pets are living longer but are increasingly suffering from many of the same chronic diseases that affect humans: heart and kidney disease, obesity, diabetes and cancer.

Therapeutic diets can help prevent, manage or even treat many conditions. For example, a sodium-restricted diet may help a dog with heart disease. Ask your veterinarian what’s best for your pet.

A healthy body weight



Too Thin



Perfect Weight



Overweight

Reading pet food labels

- Make sure your pet food offers “complete and balanced nutrition.” Look for this claim – supported by evidence that the food has undergone feeding tests or trials.
- Pet foods can have the exact same ingredient list, but differ in the nutrition they offer. Check nutritional values carefully.
- Always check the “best before” date to make sure the food is fresh.

