

Feeding Your New Dog

Nutrition and the food you choose to feed your dog will have a big impact on their overall health and energy. There are many dry, wet and raw dog foods on the market, and some are better quality than others. If you have a foster dog, don't change the food that was recommended by your foster organization without their permission.

Helpful Tips

- Follow the food package directions related to amount of food unless given different instructions by your veterinarian. Feed the smallest amount suggested for their weight (e.g., if directed to feed a 45-lb dog '1.5 to 2 cups of food daily', feed 1.5 cups).
- Feed a puppy up to 6 months old 3-4 times a day. A puppy's tummy is small and can't hold a lot of food at given time, so they will be hungry more often. Dogs over 6 months can be fed 2 times a day. Note: some dogs require different feeding schedules – if you are unsure, ask!
- Don't "free feed," or leave a bowl out for grazing throughout the day. Pick up any uneaten food after 15 minutes. This will also make housetraining easier.
- If your dog growls when you get near the food bowl, don't approach the food bowl when your dog is near it and seek advice from a qualified trainer or veterinary behaviorist.
- If feeding more than one dog, keep them separated and each should have their own bowl. Supervise them at mealtime. Some dogs steal food; others refuse to share.
- If you change dog food brands, make the change gradually over the course of a week. Replace a small quantity of the familiar food with the new chosen food to avoid diarrhea. Gradually increase the ratio of the new food to familiar food each day, depending on your dog's reaction to it.
- It's best to not feed your dog from the dinner table. It teaches them to beg, a hard habit to undo.
- Keep a bowl with fresh water available for your dog at all times.
- Your dog may not eat for the first few days. Try adding some chicken broth or canned food to the dry food to make it more enticing. If your dog hasn't eaten in 72 hours, or shows other signs of illness (e.g., extreme lethargy, vomiting, or severe diarrhea), contact your veterinarian.