

THE Dish ON Nutrish

— THE JM DIET

A well-balanced diet

A well-balanced diet is key to a long and healthy life for your pet. Each nutrient that goes into your dog's body has a purpose. Just like humans, animals need a combination of proteins, vitamins, minerals, good fats, carbohydrates, and water to function in their daily lives. Everything is affected by diet; muscle tone to skin and coat health, immunity to digestion, and even the elimination of waste. There are several factors you need to consider when selecting the right food, such as your dog's breed, age, size, activity level, current weight and their overall health and food allergies.

What's in the bowl?

When choosing what to feed your dog, you must first be able to identify the foods with the best quality ingredients like whole meats, vegetables, fruits, grains and high-quality fat sources.

- A pet food label lists the ingredients by weight; look for named animal proteins listed first (chicken, turkey, beef, lamb), as these are most important components of a dog's diet.
- Know that descriptions such as "by-product meals" or "meat by-products," mean that other animal parts are included and that may not be the healthiest choice.
- Pet foods that have descriptors in the title such as "entrée," "formula," or "dinner," are only required to contain 25% of the

main ingredient. A pet food called "Chicken and Sweet Potato Entrée" will often list chicken or sweet potato as the third or fourth ingredient. After added water, the 'main' ingredient marketed may only make up about 10% of the actual product.

- Other ingredients to avoid in selecting a dog food are corn, corn gluten, and corn meal. These are all inexpensive by-products of human food processing that offer very little nutritional value and serve mainly to bind food together. They're not harmful ingredients, but should be avoided simply for their poor nutritional value.
- Watch for added sweeteners, flavors, artificial colors, and preservatives. These are comprised mainly of grain fragments and contain few healthy animal proteins or other healthy ingredients.



How much to feed your dog

A dog is at his ideal weight when you can see the outline of his bottom two ribs. For those furry breeds where you can't distinctly see ribs, feel with your hands and fingers to make sure you can at the very least feel them. Interestingly enough, when feeding your pet a higher quality food, less food per serving is needed. Pay special attention to your dog's stools. A dog's stool should look like a soft serve ice cream, preferably a chocolate color, but a little bit more on the firm side.

Switching it up

Like humans, your dog needs a rotational diet! Aim to change it up every 2 to 3 bags of food with different meat proteins for your dog. Rotating your dog's food offers different nutritional values, and may prevent your dog from developing food allergies by building a resilient immune system. A variety of protein sources (lamb, chicken, fish, etc.) lead to an overall healthy diet. We recommend transitioning from one food to the next over the course of about nine days using the 75/25, 50/50, 25/75 ratios.

- **For 3 days** mix 75% of the original food and 25% of the new food.
- **Next 3-6 days** mix it 50/50.
- **For the last few days**, the mixture should be reversed to 25% of the old food and 75% of the new, slowly phasing the old food out altogether.



Food allergies


Food allergies can show up in several ways. They are not just a nuisance but can cause further health problems along the way. Common signs of allergies are: dry, itchy or flaky skin, red itchy paws, yeast infections, ear infections, skin infections, hot spots, excessive licking, thinning coat, bald spots, runny eyes or tear stains. If your dog has any of these problems, please consult with your veterinarian.

Is a raw diet the right choice for your pup?

A raw diet for dogs can be very beneficial as long as it is done safely. The raw meats found in grocery stores are processed for human consumption ONLY; they contain bad bacteria in them and should not be consumed raw. However, the well-balanced raw animal diets you find at pet stores are safely made for animal consumption. The meat goes through a process called HPP (High-Pressure Processing), which kills bad bacteria and only leaves good bacteria in its wake. Raw diets come in a variety of textures, from frozen to freeze-dried, all of which provide many potential benefits for your dog such as healthier skin and coat, cleaner teeth, and smaller stools. Feeding raw also removes carbohydrates from your dog's diet, which can help your fur-baby lose or maintain their weight.

If all else fails and you're still anxious over what to feed your dog, opt to have a nutrition consult with one of the experts at JM Pet Resort. Our Nutrition Advisor, Crystal Bartlett, would love to hear from you!

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