



THE BARRACKS  
VET SURGERY  
MOSMAN

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## NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR DOGS

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### **Save money**

Follow these nutrition tips to prevent many painful conditions and save yourselves hundreds of dollars in medical care from such issues as obesity or dental disease.

### **Keep their teeth clean**

Ideally feed dogs two thirds dry, and one third fresh food (raw bones or raw chicken necks with vegetables and cooked brown rice are ideal). Hard food will create mechanical friction against the teeth and keep the gums and teeth clean. If your dog has smelly breath, there are appropriate diets and treatments that your vet can recommend to reverse or arrest the problem.

### **Allergies**

Many dogs are allergic to common proteins such as lamb or beef, or to dairy products. If this is the case, your vet may recommend a low allergy diet instead. Watch for symptoms of red or itchy skin, unpleasant smells and episodes of vomiting, diarrhea and flatulence. These can be addressed with diet and medication.

### **Variety**

We incorrectly assume animals like variety, but most will get diarrhea from any change in diet, and rich tidbits (such as ham at Christmas) can cause very painful pancreatitis and ensuing costs. Treats which do not contain proteins are ideal.

### **Supermarket foods**

Buy dry food from a vet, not a supermarket. Vet-recognised brands are chosen by vets for quality and value for money, whereas supermarket brands must profit shareholders. They contain cheap extenders and unhealthy additives such as salt which pets love, and will then hold out for. Excess salt can lead to blood pressure related disease such as obesity, kidney, heart or eye problems. Don't be conned by those gorgeous ads with impressive presenters.

For more recommendations, please turn the page.



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## Supplements

Don't give mineral or vitamin supplements unless advised to by a vet. Unnecessary supplements can cause toxicosis, skeletal disorders, bone leaching, exacerbate kidney disease or contribute to bladder stones. On the other hand, your vet has great supplements for arthritic dogs.

## Age appropriate food

A young dog, like a human baby, has an immature gut and requires very plain nutritious food. These should be given often and in small amounts, significantly starting with breast milk and its immune properties. Food can be given as treats instead of a set meal if training is required. Adult dogs (12 months and older) can adjust to one or two meals a day. You can check their weight is healthy by ensuring they have a waist when looked at from above, and that you can feel but not see their ribs. A senior dog (7 years and older) may require less protein if liver or kidney disease are present, and as their energy expenditure decreases.

## Elements of food

Carbohydrates, proteins and especially fats provide energy. Complex carbohydrates such as starches and fibers are required to prevent constipation. Keep fats to a minimum to optimize skin, coat and cellular health, and to avoid fussy eating habits.

## Toxic foods

Chocolate, garlic, onions, grapes, household chemicals and fertilizer can poison dogs. Call your Vet if you suspect any has been ingested. Never feed cooked bones, which can splinter and pierce the intestines.

## Water

Rinse and refresh water bowls daily as still or dusty water is unappetising. (You can add "Aquadent" - a soluble breath freshener or "Dog Rocks" which stop brown urine spots appearing on your lawn.)

If your dog needs to drink more, try homemade (salt free) chicken stock as a lukewarm soup or as a cooling ice block depending on the weather.