

Food for thought and everything else!

Diets are found for every dog - including yours

Dogs need the variety. Your ability to tailor a diet to fit your dog's age, health consideration, and activity level will maximize the pet's health and happiness. "Special foods for dogs with specific nutritional needs have been available for some time, but in the last few years, there is a wider variety to select. There is much more competition in this market than there was just a few years ago."

PUPPY DIETS

"A chubby puppy is a healthy puppy," but that's not always true. More feeding spurs rapid growth, which can cause bone and joint troubles as the dog ages. Puppies' protein and calcium needs aren't as great as older dogs', and a puppy-specific food that's reserve for the engender size and that fuels control, healthy growth.

A problem specific to small-engender puppies is the danger of "gut fill." Because of its small size, the dog's "stomach will be filled before its caloric needs are met," so nutrient- and calorie-dense food is key.

SENIOR DIETS

For aging dogs, the conventional wisdom does hold true: "As a result of them being less active and their metabolic rate being less, their energy needs are less."

Dogs of that age (and large dogs age 5 and older) should obtain a diet formulated for their encouraging years. More foods for older dogs today contain glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, which strengthen and repair joints and cartilage.

In special foods should include high quality protein for muscles, vitamin E and other antioxidants, and moderately fermentable fiber such as beet pulp and amino acids for a healthy intestinal tract.

THERAPEUTIC DIETS

While older dogs need foods pitched to prevent health problems, dogs with more specific disturbance can get food for their needs, as well.

For example, dogs with chronic bladder infections should have diets that increase the acid levels in their urine to kill the infectious bacteria. But urinary acidification can form calcium oxalate stones and worsen any kidney damage.

"Therapeutic diets can be very helpful certain conditions, However, formulating a diet to help a pet with a particular specify means that the diet may not be capable of supporting all phases of life or that it may have impressions that can be painful to pets."

In another example, dogs with kidney trouble need diets with reduced salt and phosphorus same as human. And dogs with encouraged renal failure need reduced protein.

PERFORMANCE DIETS

Dogs engaged in tough athletic activities need diets specific as well.

Someones carbo-load, and that's about the worst thing you can do with a dog. "With a dog, you want to fat-load" - especially those involved in survival races. Dogs are very effective fat burners, and need a diet that is slightly higher in fats and proteins and lower in carbohydrates than the chow for the average pup.

Before you buy

- Find out the correct weight for your dog through observation and discussions with your veterinarian, and then feed an allow quantity.

-

- Check the package for nutritional approval from the Association of American Feed Control Officials, for a claim that the food is "complete and balanced" and for mention that feeding trials support the manufacturer's claim. This tells you the ingredients were tested on real dogs. And a simple, important clue: Look for a customer-service phone number. This shows the manufacturer is open to feedback.

-

- Stay away from generic foods. When a cheap food says it contains poultry by-products, that could mean more bone

and feathers than a more expensive food, which will have more flesh.

-

- Take advice, but make your own decision. Consult a veterinarian about your dog's special dietary needs. However, you should make the final choice, as you can best observe how your dog does on any given food.