

Adult Dog

Maintenance Nutrition for Healthy Adult Dogs



Maintenance nutrition focuses on meeting individual adult dogs' unique nutritional needs for optimal health and longevity. In addition to individual dogs' metabolism, nutrition should be tailored by life stage, physical activity, neuter status and breed size, when appropriate.

Key Messages

- Nutrition is key to helping dogs live longer, healthier lives.
 - Purina studies showed that Labrador Retrievers kept in lean body condition from puppyhood throughout their lives lived nearly 2 years longer than their heavier siblings.
 - Keeping dogs lean throughout their lives also may delay onset or decrease severity of age-related diseases such as osteoarthritis.
 - Risk of obesity increases for middle-aged dogs, so maintaining a healthy weight and body condition should be a priority throughout adulthood.
- Adult dogs need a nutritionally complete and balanced diet for optimal health and longevity.
 - Small (<10 kg [<22 lbs.] at maturity) dogs can benefit from smaller, easy-to-chew kibbles and a slightly more concentrated nutrition to address small dogs' higher metabolism, smaller stomachs and little mouths.
 - Large (25-45 kg [55-99 lbs.] at maturity) and giant (45+ kg [100+ lbs.] at maturity) dogs can benefit from a less calorically dense formula to address large dogs' slower metabolism and larger stomachs. Large-breed dog foods often include nutrients to support healthy joints and mobility.
- Portion-controlled meal feeding can help keep dogs in optimal body condition.
 - The feeding guidelines on the dog food package are a starting point that should be used in conjunction with monitoring body condition.
 - Proper portion control, which includes weighing (measuring) the food, helps ensure dogs who may be prone to weight gain are not overfed.
 - Meal feeding also allows careful monitoring of food intake and appetite that, if reduced or absent, could signal an underlying health problem.

Additional Resources

Case, L. P., Daristotle, L., Hayek, M. G., & Raasch, M. F. (2011). *Canine and feline nutrition: A resource for companion animal professionals* (3rd ed.). Mosby Elsevier.

Kealy, R. D., Lawler, D. F., Ballam, J. M., Mantz, S. L., Biery, D. N., Greeley, E. H., Lust, G., Segre, M., Smith, G. K., & Stowe, H. D. (2002). Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 220(9), 1315–1320. doi: 10.2460/javma.2002.220.1315

Lawler, D. F., Larson, B. T., Ballam, J. M., Smith, G. K., Biery, D. N., Evans, R. H., Greeley, E. H., Segre, M., Stowe, H. D., & Kealy, R. D. (2008). Diet restriction and ageing in the dog: Major observations over two decades. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 99(4), 793–805. doi: 10.1017/S0007114507871686

Lund, E. M., Armstrong, P. J., Kirk, C. A., & Klausner, J. S. (2006). Prevalence and risk factors for obesity in adult dogs from private US veterinary practices. *International Journal of Applied Research in Veterinary Medicine*, 4(2), 177–186.

Smith, G. K., Paster, E. R., Powers, M. Y., Lawler, D. F., Biery, D. N., Shofer, F. S., McKelvie, P. J., & Kealy, R. D. (2006). Lifelong diet restriction and radiographic evidence of osteoarthritis of the hip joint in dogs. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 229(5), 690–693. doi: 10.2460/javma.229.5.690

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.

