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Dog Feeding Guide

You will know from your own nutrition, that a healthy diet plays a central role in your general wellbeing and longevity. Even for a dog that has no medical nutritional requirements or sensitivities, this same principle applies. There are so many dog-diets on the market, that it can be very difficult to decide which diet to feed. Three key factors can help you make an assessment whether the food you are feeding your dog is adequate:

- is the food complete and balanced
- is the food for the correct life stage
- can the manufacturer prove that the food is complete and balanced-
the Label should include either:

“[Name] is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles for [life stage(s)].”

OR

“Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate [Name] provides complete and balanced nutrition for [life stage(s)].”

In addition, you should be able to rely on the fact that the food you are feeding is safe. In recent years 2 practices in particular have become a popular choice of dog food. BARF (Bones and Raw Feeding or Biologically Appropriate Raw Feeding) is the practice of feeding uncooked meat and other components. The accepted veterinary position on this practice is, that it can come with significant potential infection risks to you and your dog. Parasites that can be found within raw meat can only be eliminated through freezing for at least 7 days at -17 to -20°C and we know that not all bacteria are eliminated through freezing. Reports state, all raw diets may be contaminated with significant bacterial content. There are several known risks associated with this raw feeding:

- Gastrointestinal infections in your dog – your dog may or may not have diarrhea, but they will shed the bacteria even if they don’t show any signs
- Gastrointestinal infections in humans – a dog that is eating raw meat and shedding bacteria as a result can be a risk of infection to you

- Feeding of bones can lead to damage to the intestines
- An increase in the development of antibiotic resistance

If you do choose to feed raw, it is imperative that you follow some basic hygiene rules:

- Keep it frozen until use, thaw at 10°C
- Keep it separate from other food
- Handle it with separate kitchen equipment
- Don't feed your dog raw food while they are on antibiotics

The other popular practice today is feeding a 'Grain-free' diet. The consensus at this stage is that there is no proven adverse effect of feeding such diets, but there is a concern that there may be a link to certain types of heart disease. If you are considering switching your dog onto a grain free diet. We recommend discussing this with Anne or Rob first.

Finally, it is of course vital that your dog enjoys their food as it forms part of their relationship with you.

On the basis of the information available and our own experience over the years, we have decided to stock Royal Canin as our standard pet food. Royal Canin has a veterinary research background and many years' experience in dog diets. We know therefore, that we can rely on the fact that it fulfills those three key factors explained earlier. We have also experienced, that it has a high palatability. As a Royal Canin stockist, we can pass on a regular loyalty discount and offer you your first bag of puppy food free of charge.

For more information join us at Green Vets on September 29th 6pm for our free talk:

Food for thought: A dogs dinner or a feline feast