

CANINE CUISINE: GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING AND FEEDING YOUR DOG'S DIET



A healthy dog diet should include a balanced mix of protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, with the specific amounts depending on the dog's age, breed, activity level, and size. A high-quality commercial dog food that is "complete and balanced" for your dog's life stage is recommended, and you should consult your veterinarian for the best feeding plan for your individual dog.

Key points for a dog's diet:

- **Protein:** Minimum of 18% protein for adult dogs, with growing puppies needing slightly more.
- **Fat:** Around 5% of the diet should come from fat, providing essential fatty acids.
- **Carbohydrates:** Up to 50% of the diet can be carbohydrates, with a good source of fiber. Dry Foods (kibble) contain 30-60% carbohydrates.

Important considerations:

- **Life stage:** Puppies need a higher protein and calorie intake than adult dogs, while senior dogs may benefit from a diet with slightly less calories and easily digestible ingredients.
- **Feeding frequency:** Most dogs should be fed two meals per day and recommend rehydrating the kibble. This can be done by taking 1-part kibble to 1-part boiling water to the food and soak till warm to the touch. Do not use a microwave as nutrients will be lost and can cause hot spots.
- **Portion control:** Feed your dog based on their ideal body weight, typically around 2-3% of their body weight per meal.
- **Fresh water:** Always ensure your dog has access to fresh water.

What to look for in a dog food:

- **AAFCO statement:** Check for the "complete and balanced" label from the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO).
- **High-quality protein source:** Look for named animal protein like chicken, turkey, beef, or salmon as the first ingredient.
- **Fiber content:** A moderate amount of fiber is important for digestion.

What to avoid:

- **Too many treats:** Limit treats to a small portion of their daily caloric intake.
- **Toxic foods:** Avoid feeding your dog grapes, onions, chocolate, garlic, avocado, or uncooked bones. See Link for full list of foods to avoid: <https://www.aspcapetinsurance.com/resources/what-foods-can-dogs-not-eat/>
- **Sudden diet changes:** Transition gradually when switching to a new food.