



How important is proper nutrition?

Poor nutrition accounts for a remarkably high percentage of the health problems we see. These include obesity, dental problems, growth deformities, heart, kidney and skin problems. The result may be long term disabilities or even surgery.

The ideal diet should:

1. Match the specific nutritional needs of your pet at their particular life stage i.e. growth, adult or senior.
2. Reduce the risk of problems occurring later on in life e.g.: obesity, dental, heart and kidney problems.

What type of diet should I feed?

- **Home made diets** - very rarely are these nutritionally balanced and/or complete. They are relatively difficult to prepare and expensive. They are also more prone to spoilage
- **Commercial diets** - these are convenient and unlikely to have deficiencies. However some may have excesses (e.g. too much energy, calcium, salt or phosphorus) which may lead to bone, kidney, heart and weight problems

Excesses can be as detrimental as deficiencies

Diet & Nutrition

Is tinned or dry food better?

Dry food is more cost effective and helps to keep the teeth and gums healthy. Tinned food has a much higher water content which means that more is required to satisfy your pets appetite. However some pets find tinned food more palatable and easier to digest.

The most important nutrient is water. A pet can lose almost all of its fat and half of its protein reserves and still survive. A 15% loss of water will result in death.

Which brand should I choose?

There are several good diets available. We believe the best is The **Hills Science Plan** range. This is a high quality range of diets for dogs and cats that is tailored to meet the nutritional needs of their particular life stage.

Growth stage There is a diet for kittens, one for small to medium breed puppies and another for large breed puppies (adult over 25 kg). These are designed to provide the extra nutrients required by growing puppies and kittens yet avoid the excesses that often lead to obesity as well as bone and cartilage deformities that larger breed dogs are particularly prone to.

Adult stage These diets provide all the nutritional requirements of an adult pet while reducing the risk of obesity, dental and kidney disease later on in life. They also come in an 'Adult light' formulation for obesity prone individuals. For pets prone to dental problems there is an 'Oral Care' diet which uses unique fibre technology to 'clean' the teeth while eating.

Senior stage These diets are designed for the over 7's. They cater for the more relaxed lifestyle of the older pet helping him/her to remain in good shape while keeping the skin, coat and internal organs in good health.

KEY POINTS

- Poor nutrition may lead to health problems
- Different life stages have different nutritional requirements
- Always make fresh water available