



Fresh food, fully explained.



Your Free Dog Nutrition Guide

Evidence-based feeding for healthier, happier dogs

Welcome to better nutrition!

This guide will help you understand what your dog really needs to thrive. Inside, you'll discover science-backed nutrition tips, portion guidelines, and how to spot quality ingredients—all explained in plain English.

★ What's Inside This Guide:

- ✓ How to calculate your dog's daily calorie needs
- ✓ Fresh food vs. kibble: the real comparison
- ✓ Portion sizing by weight and activity level
- ✓ When to consult your veterinarian
- ✓ Understanding AAFCO standards and what they mean
- ✓ Reading ingredient labels like a pro
- ✓ Common nutrition mistakes to avoid



1. Understanding Your Dog's Calorie Needs

Every dog is unique. Their calorie needs depend on weight, age, activity level, and body condition. Here's how to calculate what your dog really needs:

STEP 1: Calculate Resting Energy Requirement (RER)

$$\text{RER} = 70 \times (\text{body weight in kg})^{0.75}$$

STEP 2: Multiply by Activity Factor

Inactive/senior dogs: **RER × 1.2-1.4**

Normal adult dogs: **RER × 1.6-1.8**

Active/working dogs: **RER × 2.0-5.0**

Puppies (growing): **RER × 2.0-3.0**

Example: A 20kg moderately active adult dog

$$\text{RER} = 70 \times (20)^{0.75} = 662 \text{ calories}$$

$$\text{Daily needs} = 662 \times 1.6 = 1,059 \text{ calories per day}$$



Pro Tip:

Body condition is just as important as the scale. A lean, muscular dog may need more calories than an overweight dog of the same size. Check your dog's ribs—you should be able to feel them easily but not see them prominently.



2. Understanding AAFCO Standards

AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) sets nutritional standards for pet food. Here's what you need to know:

What "Complete & Balanced" Really Means:

- ✓ Contains all essential nutrients in correct proportions
- ✓ Meets minimum requirements for your dog's life stage
- ✓ Verified through feeding trials or nutrient analysis

Growth

Puppies & pregnant/nursing dogs

Adult Maintenance

Healthy adult dogs

All Life Stages

Suitable for all ages

Key Nutrients AAFCO Regulates:

Protein: Min 18% adults, 22.5% puppies

Fat: Min 5.5% adults, 8.5% puppies

Essential vitamins & minerals

Calcium & phosphorus ratios

Look for this statement on labels:

"[Product] is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles for [life stage]"



3. Fresh Food vs. Kibble: The Real Comparison

Fresh Food

- ✓ Higher moisture (70-80%)
- ✓ Minimal processing
- ✓ Visible ingredients
- ✓ **3x more bioavailable nutrients**
- Shorter shelf life
- Refrigeration required
- Higher cost per serving
- ✓ Fresh preparation

Kibble

- Low moisture (10%)
- High-heat processing
- Processed ingredients
- Lower bioavailability
- ✓ Long shelf life
- ✓ Shelf stable
- ✓ Lower cost per serving
- Often contains fillers



The Bottom Line:

Fresh food offers superior nutrition through better digestibility and bioavailability. While it costs more, many pet parents find the health benefits—shinier coats, better digestion, more energy—well worth the investment.



4. Portion Guide by Weight

Use this table as a starting point. Adjust based on your dog's body condition and activity level.

Dog Weight	Low Activity	Normal Activity	High Activity
5-10 lbs	150-250 cal	200-300 cal	250-400 cal
10-20 lbs	250-400 cal	300-500 cal	400-650 cal
20-40 lbs	400-650 cal	500-800 cal	650-1050 cal
40-60 lbs	650-900 cal	800-1100 cal	1000-1400 cal
60-80 lbs	900-1100 cal	1100-1400 cal	1400-1800 cal
80-100+ lbs	1100-1400 cal	1400-1700 cal	1700-2200 cal

Feeding Frequency

Adults: 2 meals/day. Puppies: 3-4 meals/day. Senior dogs: 2 smaller meals.

Transition Tips

Mix 25% new food with 75% old food. Gradually increase over 7-10 days.



Important Note

These are estimates only. Monitor your dog's weight and adjust portions accordingly. Consult your vet if you notice significant weight changes.



5. Common Nutrition Mistakes to Avoid

Overfeeding

Over 50% of dogs are overweight. Measure portions carefully and limit treats to 10% of daily calories.

Free Feeding

Leaving food out all day can lead to obesity. Stick to scheduled meals with measured portions.

Unbalanced Home Cooking

DIY recipes often lack essential nutrients. Use vet-approved recipes or complete commercial foods.

Toxic Foods

Never feed: chocolate, grapes, onions, garlic, xylitol, macadamia nuts, or alcohol.

Sudden Diet Changes

Switching food abruptly can cause digestive upset. Always transition gradually over 7-10 days.

Ignoring Life Stage

Puppies, adults, and seniors have different needs. Feed age-appropriate formulas.



When to Consult Your Veterinarian:

- Significant weight gain or loss (10%+ of body weight)
- Persistent digestive issues (vomiting, diarrhea, constipation)
- Dull coat, excessive shedding, or skin problems
- Changes in energy level or appetite



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Ready to Nourish Your Pup?

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This guide is for informational purposes only. Always consult your veterinarian for specific dietary advice.