

Vet-Approved Homemade Dog Food Recipes

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With news of recalls and information about [commercial dog foods](#) constantly shifting, more and more dog owners are opting to prepare their own [dog food](#) at home. Dogs love home-cooked food, but making homemade dog food is not the same as cooking a meal for yourself or your human family members. There are some important rules to follow in order to [keep your dog healthy](#).

Should You Feed a Homemade Diet?

Homemade diets are growing in popularity in part because the ingredients can be controlled, so there is no fear of dog food recalls. In addition, many people are trying to eat healthier and they want the same for their dogs. Homemade diets are favored by some because they contain whole food ingredients that are generally considered healthier than processed dry or wet dog food.

Home cooking dog food is not right for everyone. There are some factors to consider before you switch your dog to a homemade diet.

- Be sure to find a dog food recipe that is complete and balanced. One of the biggest mistakes you can make is to feed an incomplete or imbalanced diet to your dog.
- It takes time to measure ingredients and prepare the food correctly. Be sure you have a schedule that allows enough time to properly make your dog's food on a regular basis.
- Make sure you can afford the ingredients to make your own dog food. Homemade food is typically less expensive than commercially prepared fresh or raw dog food, but it usually costs a little more than kibble.
- If you have a picky dog, you may need to source multiple recipes so you can change the diet periodically and keep your dog interested.

Proper Nutrition for Dogs

Like humans, dogs have nutritional needs that must be met in order for them to thrive. Dogs' nutritional needs differ from our own, so you can't exactly start sharing your own dinner with your dog. Feeding an incomplete or imbalanced diet can lead to vitamin and nutrient deficiencies in dogs.

Dogs need enough calories to meet their energy requirements. [A dog's daily caloric need](#) depends on the dog's life stage and activity level.¹ Your veterinarian can help you determine how many calories your dog needs each day.

A homemade dog diet should contain an appropriate balance of protein, carbohydrates, fiber, and fat. Vitamins and minerals must be added to the food to ensure it is complete and balanced.²

- At least 10% **protein**, such as chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef
- Up to 50% **carbohydrates**, such as rice, [pasta](#), and potatoes (also provides some fiber)

- About 2.5-4.5% **fiber**, which can come from vegetables like peas, green beans, and [carrots](#)
- At least 5.5% **fat**, usually in the form of vegetable oil
- Vitamin and mineral supplements (dog-specific; can be purchased from a reputable company like [BalanceIT.com](#))

If you are ready to get started cooking for your dog, the first step is to talk to your veterinarian. Your vet may have recipes for you to try. Or you may need a referral to a veterinary nutritionist or a vet that focuses on canine nutrition.

What to Watch for When Feeding Homemade Dog Food

It's important to monitor your dog closely when changing to homemade dog food. Stay in contact with your veterinarian regarding any changes you notice, whether good or bad. For best results, keep a record of your dog's weight and body condition over time. Weigh your dog at least once per week and contact your vet if you notice unintended weight loss or gain. Watch for [vomiting](#) or [diarrhea](#) that may occur if your dog is sensitive to one or more ingredients. Note and report these or any other [signs of illness](#) to your veterinarian.

How to Prepare Homemade Food for Dogs

When preparing a diet at home for your dog, it is essential that you follow a recipe that is complete and balanced. Once you and your vet have chosen an appropriate recipe, it's time to get started.

1. Before you begin, it's best if you have ready a food scale, food processor, pots and pans, and containers or bags for portioning the food.
2. Purchase fresh, high-quality ingredients that are not canned, seasoned, or heavily processed.
3. Set yourself up in a clean area of the kitchen that is free of [foods that may be harmful to your dog](#).
4. Measure out the ingredients. Use a food scale if possible for accuracy.
5. Cook ingredients as directed on the recipe
6. Mix food and supplements together well (ideally, use a food processor to blend ingredients).
7. Place food in containers and store in the refrigerator or freezer.
8. In general, refrigerated food will stay fresh for three to four days. Frozen dog food is best within about two months. Avoid feeding homemade dog food that has been in the freezer for more than six months.

Many owners choose to prepare food in bulk and refrigerate or freeze it in pre-portioned containers. This is a great idea to save time and money, but you might want to begin by making smaller quantities so you can see how your dog does on the diet.

Sample Dog Food Recipes

The following recipes have been created by veterinarians for general use in healthy dogs. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian before feeding your dog these or other homemade diets.

[MSPCA-Angell Sample Dog Food Recipe](#)

MSPCA-Angell offers the following recipe for the average 15 lb adult dog with no medical problems

as a possible option to concerned pet owners. This recipe is balanced for long-term feeding when fed according to instructions.

Homemade diet formulation: We recommend the use of a dietary gram scale to weigh out these foods until you become familiar with the approximate volumes of each. Food scales can be purchased from local grocery and large discount stores. All items should be blended together to prevent your pet from picking out single food items. A nutritionally balanced homemade food could result in an imbalanced intake of nutrients if ingredients are allowed to separate and the animal does not consume the entire food mixture.

These are cooked weights and amounts of each food ingredient per day for a 15 lb (ideal weight) adult dog. Final cooked weights do vary in water content and cooking times; however, weighing these ingredients is more accurate than measuring by volume.

Ingredients

Item	grams	common measure
Protein source: Chicken, dark meat cooked	80	net wt. oz.
Carbohydrate source: Rice, white, cooked	190	1 1/3 cups
Fiber source: Mixed vegetables	15	1 Tbsp
Fat source: Vegetable oil	5-10	1-2 tsp
Supplements to be mixed in the food: Balance IT Canine	6	1.5 black scoops
	Total	
	300	

http://support.mspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=latestnews_GenericPetFoodRecipes

A 15 lb dog's daily energy requirement is estimated at 443 kcal and this diet contains about 1.51 kcal per gram as fed, therefore the dog should eat about 300 grams of this diet daily. We calculate the initial food dose using a generic dog equation, however, for any individual dog this generic equation can be off by +/- 50%. If you think your dog requires more or less food, simply feed more or less in total adjusting (-/+ 25%) the amount for proper weight and condition. Please weigh the dog weekly while eating this diet.

Recipe shared with permission from [MSPCA-Angell](#).

Northwest Holistic Pet Care: Cooked Meal for a 20 lb. Dog

IMPORTANT: Before making any changes to your dog's diet, please consult with your holistic veterinarian to ensure the changes are compatible with your dog's current health status. Weigh your dog before making diet changes. Having a baseline; tracking their weight will help you in adjusting quantities should they lose or gain too much. The amount of food a dog requires will vary based on activity level, age, and overall health status.