

NUTRITION AND GENERAL CARE

When you bring your new puppy or dog home, feed the same food the breeder provided. If a change is needed, do so by gradually adding the new food to that previously fed. A sudden change of diet could cause an upset stomach or diarrhea. Diet and exercise can influence your dog's personality, health and behavior. Choose a routine that is most compatible with your schedule and the dog's age.

Many breeders and veterinarians are now placing some large breed puppies on adult dog food plans. Some breeders recommend adding a tablespoon of yogurt to balance intestinal flora. Consult your veterinarian. He/she will have access to the current research.

- The dog's most important need is water.
- The food must be "nutritionally complete and balanced," and be listed in descending order on the label. The first ingredient should be protein, such as beef, chicken, etc. (not meal).
- Free-feeding (leaving the food on the floor all day) causes housetraining problems and eliminates you as the source of all good things. The age of your dog will determine the number of meals per day. Younger dogs may need to eat more often. Feed at the same time each day and take up the food after 15 or 20 minutes.
- Avoid supplements unless suggested by your vet.
- Raw egg whites cause biotin deficiency. Biotin is a B-vitamin that is essential for growth and amino acid metabolism.
- Do not give a dog table bones! They can splinter, irritate and traumatize the digestive tract.
- Consult your vet if you feel a health problem is causing your dog to refuse food.
- Hip dysplasia or other problems could result from letting your pup get too fat.

Some recent research indicates that corn, wheat and soy may be the leading cause of canine allergies. In addition, preservatives such as BHA and BHT are also contributors.

Problem Indicators: The food first goes to the organs. It next goes to the muscles and bones. The last stop is the eyes and coat. As a result, the first affected by a food problem will be the coat. Watch for a course and dull coat as a first problem sign followed by dull eyes. It takes 30 days for diet to have any positive effect. Notify your vet before adding or changing your dog's diet.

GENERAL CARE

Your dog is totally dependent on you for his well being. Especially when outside, fresh clean water should always be available. There should be plenty of shade. A doghouse should be snug, not overly large, with bedding that can be washed. Straw or hay is not recommended. The yard should be regularly picked up and kept free from fleas and ticks (read the label on these products; make sure they are not toxic to animals). Check for dangerous plants or other materials your dog might "get into."

Inside, he should have a bed or spot where he feels safe and comfortable. Fresh water must be available at all times (except when potty training a new puppy). Schedule regular vet visits to keep vaccinations current. Test for parasites once or twice a year if your vet recommends it. After testing, it is essential to adhere to a heartworm preventative schedule. Keep your dog clean and groomed. Provide plenty of exercise and play times with your family.