**Puppy essentials: Feeding**

Unless you have been advised otherwise, puppies should be on food made especially for puppies with the right combination of nutrients to aid growth and development.

Keep feeding with puppy food till around 12-15 months of age, unless your vet states otherwise.

When moving onto junior or adult food, introduce it slowly to avoid an upset stomach, and follow the manufacturer’s instructions regarding quantity.

**Introducing a new food**

Days 1 and 2 - At all feeding times give 75% of current food and introduce 25% of the new food.

Days 3 and 4 - At all feeding times give 50% of current food and introduce 50% of the new food.

Days 5 and 6 - At all feeding times give 25% of current food and introduce 75% of the new food.

Day 7 onwards - At all feeding times give 100% of the new food.

For some examples explaining this further, please see *Changing your pet’s diet* article in the Pet Care Advice section on our website.

**Choosing a good food**

First, make sure it has the word 'complete' on the packaging. On pet food, this is a legal term that means it contains all the nutrients a puppy needs to be healthy.

Just as you would for your own food, to choose good nutrition look at the ingredients panel. Ingredients are listed in descending order, so the first ingredient will make up most of the content, down to the micro-nutrients added at the bottom of the list.

One of the top ingredients should be the same as the flavour on the front. For example, if it is a chicken dog food, then having chicken listed as the first or second ingredient is a great start.

Ones to avoid - dog foods do not need to contain sugar, flavourings or colourings, so it shouldn't be brightly coloured.

Every dog is an individual - some may have allergies to ingredients, some may go a bit woozly after eating rice-based biscuit food but be more content with a potato-based food - find one that suits your pet.

### **Slowing it down**

Food times are very exciting, and some dogs will eat very quickly, which can give digestion problems. We use lickimats instead of bowls for many benefits:

* Slows down eating their meals so aids digestion
* Prolongs one of their favourite times of day
* Increases the endorphins that come from licking and chewing, making them more relaxed
* Uses their brain as they work out how to get to the food

**Always have fresh water available for your puppy to drink.**