



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Behavior Modification Handout

Nutrition and Feeding

Proper nutrition and feeding routines are very important for your pet. What your pet eats ultimately affects his behavior and health. A good balanced diet will be the best nutrition for your companion and remember not too many treats! Creating a routine or feeding schedule will aid in digestion and reduce stress for your pet. A reliable routine will also make house training easier and less frustrating.

Starting Off On the Right Paw

Feed your pet two to three times a day (puppies and kittens will need the more frequent schedule for feeding). Meals should not be free fed but should be fed around the same time each day (three times a day for puppies and twice a day for adults). Vary feeding times to reduce stress and expectation behaviors in your pet. Feeding in the morning and then again in the evening for adult dogs (but not at exactly the same time everyday) will create better behaviors in your pet's routine. Once the food is put down allow about 15 minutes for him to eat and then whatever is left pick up. Free feeding can work well for felines however a "meal time" will work best for your dog or puppy. If your pet is distracted or bothered during meal time by a child or another pet you should make sure they have undisturbed time to eat quietly. If your puppy is consistently leaving food in the bowl after a meal it may be time to eliminate that meal. Usually this meal is the mid day meal. Before removing food from your pet's diet always ensure that they are eating the recommended amount to maintain a healthy body weight. Use the same product or food brand when feeding to reduce digestive upset. Changing or rotating the protein source can help to ward off food intolerances and food allergies. While it will not guarantee your pet will never suffer a food allergy providing different protein (chicken, beef, duck) will decrease the chances. If your pet has special dietary needs always consult with your veterinarian before selecting or changing food products. Fresh water should always be available to your pet. Make sure to wash your pet's bowls between each use to eliminate the build up of bacteria.

Avoiding the Pitfalls

Nutrition is important to a puppy or kitten's development. When selecting a food for your pet, be sure to check the ingredient label. Meat should be first on the list, if so then it is probably a good quality food and keep in mind the meat source should be identified such as chicken or beef. If the label has "meat" as an ingredient it could be any kind of meat or a mixture of different kinds. A clearly identified, whole meat product is the best protein source. You should try to avoid any byproducts, artificial preservatives, dyes, corn or corn byproducts, sugars and too much protein.

What is in there?

Corn Gluten Meal – The byproduct after the manufacturing of corn syrup. If these are high on the ingredient list it would indicate that corn has been used instead of a more costly alternative. Corn and corn byproducts are inexpensive substitutes for a protein source and tend to be used as filler. Corn may inhibit your dog's natural ability to receive serotonin in the brain. Serotonin is important and helps reduce stress and anxiety in your pet. Studies suggest that low levels of serotonin can lead to behavioral problems.

Whole Grain Corn - may be difficult to digest and is often used as an inexpensive source of protein.

Ground Corn – (corn meal or corn chop) the entire corn kernel ground or chopped and must contain no more than 4 % foreign material

Cereal Food Fines – the byproduct of breakfast cereal production which consists of particles of the foods.

Brewer's Rice – are the small fragments of rice kernels that have been separated from larger kernels of milled rice and often used as filler.

BHA – butylated hydroxyanisole,

BHT – butylated hydroxytoluene

Ethoxyquin –

Are all artificial preservatives linked to some types of cancer and liver and kidney dysfunction.

Animal digest – material which results from chemical and / or enzymatic hydrolysis of clean and undecomposed animal tissue. The animal tissue shall be free of hair, horns, teeth, hooves and feathers, except in such trace amounts as might occur unavoidably in good factory practice and shall be suitable for animal feed. (as defined by the AAFCO)

Tips and Hints

- Common ingredients used in pet foods are often left over products from other food processing.
- The first five ingredients on the label are what the food contains the most of.
- You should store your pet's food in the original bag in a sealed or air tight container.
- Food will only stay fresh for about 2 weeks after you open it.
- Read the label!
- Always check the "use by" date!