

CANINE NUTRITION

Feeding Your Puppy

A high-quality balanced diet is very important particularly during your pup's first 12 months. Your pup has different nutritional requirements to an adult dog, including extra protein requirements for muscle development and calcium for bone growth. At Macarthur Vet Group we recommend **Royal Canin Junior Diets** - a premium range of commercial puppy food. At least 75% of your pup's diet should be derived from a balanced commercial diet. Pups should be fed 3-4 small meals a day until 4 months of age, then twice daily at least until fully grown. With a proper balanced diet, calcium and vitamin supplements are unnecessary and we advise against using them.

Puppies and dogs do not need to drink milk. However if you wish to provide milk in addition to water, please use a special pet milk. Cow's milk contains too much lactose for dogs and can cause diarrhoea.

Ensure that your pup always has access to clean water and change it daily.



Feeding Requirements After Desexing

Desexed (or neutered) dogs have slightly greater risk of becoming obese. Obesity means being more than 15% overweight. It increases the risk of a number of conditions including joint diseases, diabetes and heart disease, and reduces life expectancy. Prevention from an early age through appropriate feeding is far simpler than trying to get your dog to lose weight after becoming obese.

Whilst larger breeds of puppy desexed at 6 months of age still have growth requirements (with an increased need for protein and calcium compared to adults) they now have a reduced need for calories. Royal Canin has a specialised neutered range of foods (**Royal Canin Neutered Junior**) to meet the nutritional needs of desexed growing dogs whilst reducing the risk of gaining weight (when feeding guidelines are followed) by controlling calories and improving satiety (the feeling of fullness). Even as adults, dogs are best fed twice daily to improve metabolism and reduce the risk of weight gain, for the same reason that humans are advised not to skip breakfast.

Feeding Guide for Royal Canin Neutered diets:

Small breeds (less than 10kg)	R/C Adult Neutered small breed diet	after desexing for life.
Medium breeds (10-25kg)	R/C Junior Neutered medium breed diet R/C Adult Neutered medium breed for life	after desexing until 12 months old then
Large breeds (over 25kg)	R/C Junior Neutered large breed R/C Neutered Adult large breed for life	after desexing until 15 months old then

As well as being a complete balanced diet for desexed pets, Royal Canin diets also provide for the specialised needs of various dog sizes. Small breeds are more prone to dental disease so **R/C Adult Neutered small breed** diets contain the mechanical and chemical teeth cleaning characteristics of R/C dental diets (described below). Small breed diets also contain a number of vitamins and ceramides to reduce skin irritation and contain reduced levels of struvite and oxalate precursors to reduce the risk of urine crystal formation. Medium breeds are prone to skin and coat problems so **R/C Neutered Medium breed** diets contain key nutrients to optimise skin and coat health. With large breeds prone to joint conditions, chondroitin, glucosamine and omega 3 fatty acids have been incorporated into **R/C Neutered large breed** diets.

Feeding Requirements of Adult Entire (Non-Desexed) Dogs

You may choose not to desex your dog if you are considering breeding. Refer to "Should I Get My Pet Desexed" for why we recommended that all dogs not intended for breeding be desexed.

Entire dogs can still become overweight, so for most of these dogs we recommend to feed the R/C neutered adult range (see above). If however your dog is pregnant, lactating, very active or very thin, then we have a range of diets with a higher calorie content. Please ask our staff about the most appropriate diet for your pet.

Some dogs, particularly if they have been unwell, have more specialised dietary requirements. Ask our staff for more information about our Royal Canin veterinary/prescription range of foods.

Dental Health

The best way to prevent dental disease in dogs is to brush their teeth every day, If done properly brushing your dog's teeth every day can reduce plaque build up by 100%. We can advise/train you on how to clean your dog's teeth. But this may not always be practical.

Abrasive foods such as raw bones, greenies treats and dental diets can reduce plaque build up by 40%. Feeding **raw bones** (2-3 days a week) is a great way to keep your pets teeth clean but does carry a small risk of fracturing teeth, intestinal obstruction or constipation. It is important that bones are large enough to prevent your dog from swallowing them whole. Raw chicken necks are ideal for cats and small dogs; however large lamb shanks are more suitable for large breed dogs.

Greenies are a nutritionally balanced treat with demonstrated efficacy in controlling plaque and tartar build up. They are gentle on teeth and are soluble (breaking down completely within 24 hours of ingestion) so are less likely to cause the problems that are associated with feeding raw bones. Greenies should be fed every day to achieve maximum benefit. Greenies are the only treat on the market endorsed by the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC). Greenies are available through Macarthur Vet Group, please ask our staff which size greenie best suits your dog.

Royal Canin Dental is a diet specially formulated for adult dogs to effectively reduce plaque and tartar development. A combination of larger kibble size (providing a mechanical cleaning effect) and calcium binding agents to reduce plaque (a chemical cleaning effect) achieves this reduction in risk of dental disease. Some of these benefits have been incorporated into small dog junior diets as they are more prone to dental problems than larger breeds.

Although feeding dry food is superior to wet food, most dry food tends to shatter after a pet bites into them so does not offer the same teeth cleaning benefits as the specially designed foods described above.



What NOT to feed your dog

To maintain a healthy dog it is important **NOT** to feed the following:

Human food ONLY diets – human nutritional requirements are different to those of our pets. Making your own home made diet for your dog or cat is very costly and requires over 50 ingredients to ensure pets are receiving a complete balanced diet not deficient in essential nutrients. Puppies raised on human food alone may suffer calcium deficiency, bone growth abnormalities, stunted growth or a poor immune system, making them susceptible to disease. Human food is acceptable as a treat only.

Meat ONLY diets – severe calcium deficiencies can result from feeding meat only diets to puppies. Growing animals require calcium for healthy bone growth (puppies and kittens have a higher calcium requirement than adult dogs and cats). Calcium deficiency may result in abnormal bone growth, increases the susceptibility to fractures and may be very painful (premium commercial diets provide balanced calcium levels). Milk is NOT a suitable supplement for calcium in an unbalanced diet. Calcium supplementation is NOT required in pets fed a balanced diet but may be required for those pets where meat makes up a large portion of their diet. DO NOT supplement calcium before consulting with one of our vets as too much calcium in growing animals is also dangerous.

Cooked bones – cooked bones splinter very easily and may get caught in the mouth, throat or intestines (retrieval of lodged bones may involve an anaesthetic and surgery – this is expensive!). Bones should be of an appropriate size for your pet and always fed RAW.

Chocolate – dogs often like the taste of chocolate, but it may be toxic if consumed in the wrong amount. The theobromine and caffeine in chocolate affects the heart and nervous system of dogs potentially causing seizures and death.

Onions (including those on pizza and in left-overs) – onions are toxic to red blood cells and may cause a severe life threatening anaemia in dogs.

Large amounts of liver and cod liver oil – liver contains large amounts of vitamin A. Spinal abnormalities, blindness and other bone deformities may result if large amounts of vitamin A are consumed. Liver treats are perfectly safe if kept as treats and not used as the staple diet of your pet.

Meat containing preservatives – some pet meats (those NOT purchased from a butcher) e.g. kangaroo meat, contain large amounts of sulphur dioxide as a preservative. In large quantities this may cause vitamin B1 deficiency. Pet meats should NOT be fed as a major portion of your pet's diet.

Grapes and sultanas – recently implicated as causing acute kidney failure in dogs due to an unknown toxin.

Macadamia nuts – are poisonous to dogs potentially causing muscle tremors, weakness and depression.

Excessively fatty food – can result in a painful potentially life threatening inflammation of the pancreas known as pancreatitis. This results in abdominal pain, lethargy, reduced appetite and vomiting.

Mouldy Foods - mouldy foods may contain mycotoxins. These can cause muscle tremors, loss of coordination, and convulsions. They can also cause severe liver damage and sometimes results in death.

Bread Dough - Ingestion of bread dough can be life-threatening to dogs. The heat of an animal's body will cause the dough to rise in the stomach. Ethanol is produced during the rising process and the dough may expand several times its original size. Signs seen with bread dough ingestion may include severe abdominal pain, bloating, vomiting, loss of coordination, and depression. Surgery is often required to remove the dough.