

“Nutrition and Management of Dogs, Cats, and Exotic Pets”

**4-H Veterinary Science
Extension Veterinary Medicine
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<http://aevm.tamu.edu>**

Objectives

- Discuss the importance of small animal nutrition
- Describe the five major nutrients in foods and why each is important in the diet
- Discuss feeding recommendations for dogs at different life stages
- Discuss feeding recommendations for cats at different life stages
- Discuss feeding recommendations for exotic pets

The Nutrients

- Essential Food Nutrients Lesson – provides details on water and 5 nutrients
 - Carbohydrates, lipids (fats, oils), protein, minerals, vitamins
- Sugars – cause diarrhea in adult dogs and cats
- Starches (rice, corn) – source of carbohydrates
- Linoleic fatty acid required in diet of dogs
- Linoleic and arachidonic fatty acids required in diet of cats
- Minimum 22% protein required in diet of adult dogs
- Minimum 32 % protein required in diet of adult cats
- Taurine amino acid required in diet of cats
- Vitamin A required in diet of cats

Feeding Dogs and Cats

- Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO)
 - Validation on package for ingredients and directions
- Neutered dogs and cats require 20-30% less than feeding directions

Feeding Puppies

- 3-4 wks to 3 mos of age (weaned at 6-7 wks)
 - Gruel of dry food or canned food
 - 15-20 minutes, 4 times a day
- 3-8 mos of age
 - Dry or canned food
 - 15 minutes, 3 times a day
- 8 mos of age to maturity
 - Dry or canned food
 - Quantity by package directions, 2 times a day



Feeding Adult Dogs

- Maintain lean body condition
- Serious health issues associated with obesity
- Periodically weigh dog to determine steady wt
- Maintenance not high-protein, high-energy diet
- Work, pregnancy, lactation increase energy requirement up to 3 times
 - Increase intake
 - High energy diet



Feeding Older Dogs

- Senior diet – low calories, protein, salt
- Special diets – kidney and heart failure



Feeding Cats



- Dog food does not meet diet requirements of cats
- Feed canned, semi-moist, and/or dry food
- Feed free-choice
- Most cats regulate intake
- Maintain lean body condition
- Serious health issues associated with obesity
- Starvation is more serious and faster than dogs
- Feed kittens, adult cats, older cats similar to dogs



Feeding Gerbils

- Feed commercial pelleted rodent diet
- Supplement of mixed grains and seeds



Feeding Guinea Pigs

- Feed commercial pelleted guinea pig food
- Supplement of fresh cabbage, kale, hay, fruit
- Vitamin C is required in diet



Feeding Hampsters

- Feed commercial pelleted rodent diet
- Supplement of seeds, vegetables, fruit, hay, chopped meat, mealworms, live insects



Feeding Rabbits

- Feed commercial rabbit pellets
- Supplement of hay
- Ingestion of fecal pellets (B vitamins)



Feeding Ferrets

- Feed
 - Canned, semi-moist and/or dry food
 - Dog and/or cat foods
 - Commercial ferret chow
 - Commercial mink food

