

Practical Feeding Recommendations For Treats



What snacks and treats should I give my pet?

There is a huge variety of snacks and treats available today for pets. When selecting a snack or treat, there are a couple of things to consider:

- Is the product specifically designed for the dog or cat? Human foods should not be used as treats or snacks as they are typically high in calories and fat which contribute to obesity or even pancreatitis, which is a life-threatening disease. Feeding people food can even lead to frequent begging, a behavior that quickly becomes tiresome.
- What is the purpose of the snack or treat? If used for training and behavioral rewards, you want to insure the treat is soft, easily and quickly chewed. If it is used for dental health, you want to make sure that it has been specifically designed for and clinically proven to promote dental health.

When should I give my pet treats?

- Treats should only be used as a reward. Never use treats to distract a dog from an undesirable behavior such as barking, as the treat will only reinforce the negative behavior.
- Treats should never be used to appease owner guilt (e.g. arriving home late, not having time to take the dog to the park, etc.).
- Remember that treats do not have to be a food! You can help prevent your pet from becoming obese by giving your pet a non food treat for good behavior, such as a tummy rub, playing with a new toy, etc. By substituting non-food value treats, you can help to reduce the number of excess calories your pet consume each day, and yet still give them a happy, healthy life!

How many treats should I give my pet?

The number of treats that any pet receives should be limited to less than 10% of the daily caloric requirements (and the amount of food fed each day should be reduced accordingly by 10%).

- For example, if a pet needs 1000 kcal of energy per day, the maximum numbers of calories that the daily treats should provide is 100 kcal. If the treats contain 50 kcal per treat, then the pet should only receive a maximum of 2 treats per day.

Should I give a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement to my pet?

No. If your pet is on a complete and balanced diet that diet provides all the nutrients that the pet needs for health. Adding a vitamin or mineral supplement to the diet may imbalance the diet and can actually be harmful to your pet. This is especially true for young growing large breed dogs. Adding a calcium or phosphate supplement to their diet can actually increase the risk of developmental bone diseases.

- More frequent professional dental cleanings
- Referral to a veterinary dental specialist
- Advanced periodontal treatment

Should I give milk to my pet?

No. Milk is not an essential part of the diet for puppies, kittens or adult animals after weaning. Indeed after weaning, many dogs and cats are lactose intolerant. Providing milk to these pets can cause diarrhea.

For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

