



Dr. Mulder is the owner and medical director of the Pet Hospital, located at 403 Fairview Drive in Brantford. While treating the 'whole' patient, his experience in emergency medicine, nutrition and 20 years as a general practitioner, allows him to lead the team as they serve the client, helping to meet all their pets' needs. This advice column is provided to help loving pet owners to make decisions in the care of their pet. If you have a question for Dr. Mulder, please send an email to drmulder@fairviewpet.ca or call the Pet Hospital at 519-753-7257.

Health Care

Isn't Just For Humans!

DR. MULDER TALKS PET CARE GOOD PET NUTRITION

Q Dear Dr. Mulder:
How do I know what is a good food for my puppy?

Dr. Mulder: The most important part of feeding your puppy is to ensure that all the essential nutrients are available in a serving size that satisfies. Research has shown that if a puppy eats more food than he needs, his growth rate increases. Unfortunately some puppy foods are so high in calories that it is easy for a puppy to over eat. My goal is to keep your puppy lean and to feed him only that amount of food that is required for healthy growth.

For breeds that are at risk for hip and elbow dysplasia, (dys=bad, plasia=growth) it is especially important to ensure growth is optimal. Bones grow from a cartilage layer on the end of the bones. This cartilage is gradually replaced by bone at a very slow rate. The more rapid the growth rate, the thicker the layer of cartilage. Cartilage is softer and more pliable than bone and thick layers of it will bend and deform. In addition if these thick layers are forced to carry heavy loads (rapid weight gain) cracks and crevices can appear. If we monitor your puppy's growth and compare to breed specific standard growth curves, we can calculate his food energy requirement and choose the right food and determine feeding amounts.

I recommend diets specially formulated to avoid rapid growth and ensure bones mature properly. Many have recommended a switch to adult food to try solve this problem but they are lower in bone building nutrients and it takes longer for cartilage to change into bone, so nothing is solved! Other nutrients are important too; optimal levels omega fatty acids promote healthy skin and a lustrous coat, Fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) and digestive enzymes maintain a healthy digestive tract. Although many of us are attracted to foods labelled "All Natural" or "No Preservatives Added," be aware that labelling requirements in Canada allow a food to be called "All Natural" if at least one ingredient is not altered from its natural state. All dry foods must have some preservatives (whether added at baking or already in an ingredient) otherwise the nutrient value will be gone long before it arrives at the store.

We must also consider the treats you give your puppy. I do not want him to get too many empty calories in cookies. Treats should not make up more than 10% of his caloric intake. You can use puppy food and give pieces of kibble as treats or if you choose to use bits of human food for treats, check our website for a chart "Approximate Calorie Amounts in Food treats."

Next time I will consider the implements your puppy uses to eat – teething problems are up next!

Fairview Drive Pet Hospital

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