

# How Often Should You Feed Your Pet?

by [Petfinder](#)

## ***THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM PETFINDER.COM'S – THE ADOPTED DOG BIBLE***

Most experts recommend feeding your dog twice a day — once in the morning and once in the evening — though puppies under five months of age should be fed three to four times a day, or as directed by your veterinarian.

While most dogs will dig in the moment you place the bowl on the floor, you may find that your adopted dog is a finicky eater, at least at first. After all, he's been thrust into a new home with new people, and he may be too nervous to eat. If this is the case, you will need to teach him to eat on a schedule.

Leave the bowl on the floor for ten minutes and then pick it up, regardless of whether he has eaten. (If your dog is a slow eater, this period can be extended to twenty minutes, but only if he is still eating during that time and hasn't gone off in search of other entertainment.)

At the next scheduled feeding time, put the bowl back down, again for only ten minutes. Pretty soon your dog will learn that he needs to eat when the food is offered.

Having regularly-scheduled feeding times not only establishes a routine, it also allows you to monitor your dog's health. If he picks at his food throughout the day, you may not notice right away if he's not eating well. But if he normally eats heartily as soon as you put the bowl down, you will immediately see a sudden lack of appetite, which is often an indication that he's not feeling well. If your dog's appetite doesn't improve in a few days, have him checked by your veterinarian.

Another benefit of set feedings is that a dog who eats on a schedule poops on a schedule. In addition, if you live in an urban area, leaving a bowl of kibble on the ground all day can attract unwanted house guests, like cockroaches and mice. It is to everyone's advantage to keep feeding times regular.

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## **Pet Feeding Recommendations**

One of the most common questions we receive from our clients concerns feeding. From how much to feed, what type of food to feed and what time(s) of day to feed, the options in today's pet food market can perplex even the most educated pet owner. Not only do food-intake needs of each pet vary, but they change throughout his/her life. Read on for a general overview of our recommendations for keeping your pet at his/her optimal health through offering a well-balanced and healthy feeding routine.

### **Frequency of feedings**

Puppies and kittens should be fed 4-6 times a day. This should gradually decrease by the time the pet reaches 50 percent of his/her adult body weight. At this stage, pets should be fed three meals per day. Dogs that burn extra calories, such as working or exceedingly active dogs, should be fed more frequently to satisfy their added energy requirements. Smaller, more frequent feedings might be suitable for pets with health problems that decrease their appetite.

### **Feeding methods**

Because overconsumption of food is a leading cause of pet obesity, some doctors do not recommend all-day access to food. Instead, implement portion-control feeding, in which food is measured using a standard cooking cup to weigh the amount of food your veterinarian recommends for your pet's daily intake. Feed your pet at the same times each day to regulate the digestive system and avoid accidents.

Typically, dogs prefer an element of privacy when they are eating. Put down the bowl of food and walk away. Adult cats prefer as many as 8-16 small meals per day. This can be regulated using a timed feeder that opens to release a small meal.

### **Providing enough water**

Pets should have access to clean, fresh water at all times. If you are concerned that your pet is not consuming enough water, feeding canned food helps encourage water consumption. Cats typically prefer to drink at night because they are nocturnal in nature. Because cats are very sensitive to getting their whiskers wet, use a bowl with a wide surface area.

### **Providing snacks and treats**

Treats can be an important tool for training your pet's behavior as well as bonding with your pet. It's important to remember that treats should only be used as a reward—not as a supplement to food or for any other reason. Unless recommended by your veterinarian for your pet's specific situation, your pet's physical health does not require the use of treats or supplements to stay healthy.

If you decide to feed your pet treats as a training tool, ensure that it is specifically designed for a dog or cat. Do not feed your pet human foods as treats or supplements, since this can cause a wide range of health problems from gastrointestinal upset to more serious problems. Low-calorie treats are more desirable because they will be less likely to contribute to weight gain. Contact your veterinarian if you have feeding questions specific to your pet.

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