

CONTENTS

#### MAKING THE **SWITCH**

The right way to change your dog's food

Page 3

### YOUR CATS NUTRITIONAL

NEEDS

Cats have specific dietary requirements

Page 4

#### **KEEP IT CLEAN!**

Keeping your pets toys and bedding clean is essential

Page 6

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# Making the SWITCH The right way to change your dog's food

Changing your dog's food should be done gradually to avoid upsetting their digestive system. A sudden switch can lead to gastrointestinal issues like diarrhea, vomiting, or a loss of appetite. Whether you're transitioning to a different brand, switching from puppy to adult food, or moving to a special diet for health reasons, a slow and steady approach is best.

#### 1. Choose the Right New Food:

Before starting the transition, consult your veterinarian, especially if your dog has any health conditions. Consider your dog's age, breed, size, activity level, and any allergies when selecting a new food. Ensure the new food meets AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) standards for balanced nutrition.

#### 2. Transition Gradually:

The general recommendation is to make the switch over 7 to 10 days. Start by mixing a small amount of the new food with your dog's current food. For example:

- Days 1-2: 75% old food, 25% new food
- Days 3-4: 50% old food, 50% new food
- Days 5-6: 25% old food, 75% new food
- Day 7 and onward: 100% new food

Monitor your dog's stool, appetite, and behavior throughout this period. If you notice signs of digestive upset - such as loose stools, vomiting, or lethargy - slow down the transition or consult your vet.

#### 3. Keep Mealtimes Consistent:

Feed your dog at the same times every day to help with digestion and establish routine. Avoid giving too many treats or table scraps during the transition, as these can interfere with the process.

#### 4. Monitor for Allergies or Intolerances:

Even if your dog tolerates the new food well, watch for signs of food allergies, such as itching, ear infections, or excessive licking. These may take days or weeks to appear. If any concerns arise, consult your veterinarian and consider an elimination diet under their guidance.

#### 5. Hydration and Overall Health:

Ensure your dog has access to fresh water at all times, as some changes in diet (especially to dry kibble or higher-protein formulas) may make them thirstier. Keep an eye on their energy levels, coat condition, and weight during and after the transition.

Changing your dog's food carefully and with attention to their health ensures a smooth switch and supports their long-term well-being.







Cats have specific dietary requirements that differ significantly from dogs and other omnivores, as they are obligate carnivores. This means their bodies are biologically adapted to derive essential nutrients from animal-based proteins and fats. A cat's diet must include certain nutrients that they cannot synthesize on their own, making proper nutrition critical to their health and longevity.

#### **Protein and Amino Acids**

Cats require a high-protein diet to maintain muscle mass and support vital functions. Animal proteins provide essential amino acids like taurine and arginine, which are crucial for heart function, vision, reproduction, and a healthy immune system. Taurine deficiency, for instance, can lead to serious health issues such as heart disease (dilated cardiomyopathy) and blindness.

#### Fats and Fatty Acids

Fats are a concentrated source of energy and are vital for skin and coat health. Cats need certain fatty acids like arachidonic acid, which they cannot produce themselves. These are found in animal fats, reinforcing the importance of a meat-based diet.

#### **Vitamins and Minerals**

Cats also have specific vitamin requirements. They need preformed vitamin A from animal sources, as they cannot convert beta-carotene (from plants) into usable vitamin A. Vitamin D

must also come from their diet, as cats do not synthesize it effectively through sunlight. Calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals must be balanced to support bone health and organ function.

#### **Hydration and Water Intake**

Cats have a low thirst drive and are prone to dehydration, especially if fed dry food alone. Including wet food in their diet or ensuring fresh water is always available helps support kidney and urinary tract health.



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Keeping your dog and cat's beds and toys clean is an important part of maintaining their health and hygiene. Just like humans, pets can be exposed to dirt, bacteria, parasites, and allergens that accumulate on their belongings. Regular cleaning helps to prevent unpleasant odours, reduce the risk of skin infections, and keep your home smelling fresh.

#### **Cleaning Pet Beds**

Your pet's bed should ideally be washed every 1-2 weeks, or more often if it becomes visibly soiled or starts to smell. Most pet beds come with removable covers that can be machine washed. Use a pet-safe detergent that is free from harsh chemicals or strong fragrances, as these can irritate your pet's skin. Wash on a hot cycle if the fabric allows, to help kill bacteria and dust mites. If the bed doesn't have a removable cover, vacuum it thoroughly to remove hair and debris before spot-cleaning or hand-washing it. Always allow the bed to dry completely to prevent mould or mildew growth.

#### **Cleaning Toys**

Toys should be cleaned based on how frequently your pet uses them and the material they're made from. Soft plush toys can often be washed in the washing machine using a gentle, fragrance-free detergent. For best results, place them in a laundry bag or pillowcase to protect them during the wash.

Rubber and plastic toys can be soaked in warm, soapy water and scrubbed with a brush to remove grime. Rinse thoroughly to remove any soap residue. Some toys are dishwasher-safe, but always check the manufacturer's guidelines first.

#### Why It Matters

Dirty toys and bedding can harbour harmful bacteria, fleas, ticks, or fungi. Pets, especially those who like to chew or lick their toys, can ingest germs that may cause digestive or dental issues. Regular cleaning also allows you to inspect these items for signs of damage, such as loose stuffing or broken parts, which could pose a choking hazard.

#### **Tips for Success**

Rotate toys regularly, allowing time to clean some while others are in use. Vacuum areas around pet beds frequently to remove pet hair and dander. Keeping a cleaning schedule for your pet's items not only improves their well-being but also contributes to a healthier living environment for the whole household.







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