

Diets for Dogs
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

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DIETS FOR DOGS

Dogs used to be able to survive very well, eating scraps from the table. Manufacturers of modern pet foods and, more particularly, of the modern [prescription diets](#), have put tremendous scientific effort into their work of formulation. However, man is not perfect nor can his formulations be. Errors of omission and commission will occur despite best efforts. If a 'prepared' diet is fed daily with no variety, these errors will multiply. Add to this effect the serious problem of loss of real nutrient value by processing and the addition of questionable ingredients in order to preserve the food and in order to attempt to reconstitute its lost ingredients plus the fact that raw materials selected may not be those that we would buy to feed to a dog and you have a potential for trouble. Throw into this imperfect situation the huge individual variation of each dog from breed to breed and from individual to individual and it is hard to see how a single prepared food can be anything but 'short of perfect'.

Whatever animal we are feeding, whether it is a dog, a cat or a horse, we must consider its evolutionary development and the food which that would bring for it.

Dogs are scavengers and hunters. Yes, they will eat meat, both fresh and slightly rotten (which a cat cannot do) but they also pick fruit, dig roots, eat herbivore dung, break open nuts and basically take on an omnivorous rôle. Their development in 'domestication' has been over too short a time span to nullify this background. Therefore their diet should reflect this. Raw meat is, in general, best but one has to remember tapeworms in sheep and rabbit meat. Pork and pig products appear to be unsuitable. Raw, 'green' tripe seems to be excellent for most (but smelly). Liver or kidney should be organic, since these organs serve an excretory function and any toxins fed to the original animal may be concentrated there.

One must consider the dog's very well-adapted stomach for meat eating and perhaps feed starchy foods separately from meaty foods, if at all. Dogs have no

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dietary requirement for starchy foods (carbohydrates / carbs). Cooked vegetables or raw and liquidised vegetables are essential. Carrots **must** be 'organic'. In chronically-ill animals I attempt to avoid wheat, sugar, pasteurised milk and salt. I also remove all possible artificial additives from their diets and, where possible, shop '[organic](#)'. It is always important to remember that what a food animal or plant has been fed will materially govern the final food product obtained from it.

Food is best fresh and wholesome (unprocessed), whether cooked or not. Beware the 'natural' tag, under which many manufacturers of processed food hide but not always fairly. Avoid the microwave. Patients seem to have no problem adapting immediately to a natural wholefood diet and such a diet can often *do away with the need for medicine*. I believe that there is no such thing as good medicine without attention to diet. It is the platform upon which we can build health.

Yes, a proper natural diet, worked out philosophically and logically, not just scientifically, is best. No, it is not cheap and Yes, it is less convenient than the 'fast foods' on offer from the manufacturers.

Christopher Day – November 1995

See also: [Nutrition as Therapy](#)

See also: <http://www.naturalfeeding.co.uk>

Booklet: '*Feeding Dogs the Natural Way*' by Christopher Day is obtainable from the AVMC office (address at the heading of this page).

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