

Everyday Care of Your Yorkshire Terrier

Enter into a sensible discussion of dietary and feeding considerations, exercise, grooming,

by Rachel Keyes

Dietary and Feeding Considerations

You have probably heard it a thousand times—you are what you eat. Believe it or not, it is very true. For dogs, they are what you feed them because they have little choice in the matter. Even those people who truly want to feed their dogs the best often cannot do so because they do not know which foods are best for their dogs.

Dog foods are produced in three basic types: dry, semi-moist and canned. Dry foods are for the cost conscious because they are much less expensive than semimoist and canned. Dry foods contain the least fat and the most preservatives. Most canned foods are 60–70% water, while semimoist foods are so full of sugar that they are the least preferred by owners, though dogs welcome them (as does a child candy).

TEST FOR PROPER DIET

A good test for proper diet is the color, odor and firmness of your dog's stool. A healthy dog usually produces three semi-hard stools per day. The stools should have no unpleasant odor. They should be the same color from excretion to excretion. Three stages of development must be considered when selecting a diet for your dog: the puppy stage, the adult stage and the senior stage.

Puppy Stage

Puppies have a natural instinct to suck milk from their mother's breasts. They should exhibit this behavior the first day of their lives. If they do not suckle within a few hours, the breeder attempts to put them onto their mother's nipples. Their failure to feed means that the breeder has to feed them himself. This will involve a baby bottle and a special formula. Their mother's milk is much better than any formula because it contains colostrum, a sort of antibiotic milk, which protects the puppy during the first eight to ten weeks of their lives.

GRAIN-BASED DIETS

Some less expensive dog foods are based on grains and other plant proteins. While these products may appear to be attractively priced, many breeders prefer a diet based on animal proteins and believe that they are more conducive to your dog's health. Many grain-based diets rely on soy protein, which may cause flatulence (passing gas).

There are many cases, however, when your dog might require a special diet. These special requirements should only be recommended by your veterinarian. Puppies should be allowed to nurse for six weeks and they should be slowly weaned away from their mother by introducing small portions of canned meat after they are about one month old. The first three weeks of the Yorkshire Terrier puppy's life require extra caution from the breeder as the breed, due to its small size, is susceptible to neonatal hypoglycemia, also called low blood sugar. Hypoglycemia is a concern of most of the toy breeds, and in very young pups the concern is due to the limited reserves of glycogen and the fact that the dog's liver enzymes are not yet functioning fully. For this reason, supplemental feedings are needed. Hypoglycemia can be expressed in shaking, tremors and nervousness. Discuss the condition with your vet so that you are prepared to treat any incidence in a young pup.

By the time they are eight weeks old, the pups should be completely weaned and fed solely a good puppy food. During the weaning period, their diet is most important as puppies grow fastest during their first year of life. Growth foods can be recommended by your veterinarian, and the puppy should be kept on this diet for 9 to 12 months. Puppy diets should be balanced for your dog's needs and supplements of vitamins, minerals and protein should not be necessary. **Adult Diets**
A dog is considered an adult when he has stopped growing. The growth is in height and/or length. Do not consider the dog's weight when the decision is made to switch from a puppy diet to a maintenance diet. Again you should rely upon your veterinarian to recommend an acceptable maintenance diet. Major dog-food manufacturers specialize in this type of food and it is necessary for you to select the one best suited to your dog's needs. Active dogs have different requirements than sedate dogs. A Yorkshire Terrier reaches adulthood at about two years of age, though some dogs mature as late as three years.

Senior Diets

Bathing, Ear Cleaning, Nail Clipping
Traveling With Your Dog

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