

## Good Food for Great Boxers

**Proper nutrition enhances your Boxer's sleek good looks and vibrant personality.**

*Fran Hodgkins*

Second, there's the challenge of ensuring your home cooking will provide adequate nutrition. Rather than experiment on your own (and on your poor Boxer), ask your veterinarian for guidance. He or she can most likely recommend some recipes and suggest any supplements your Boxer may need. Dr. Pitcairns' book is another excellent source for time-tested homemade meal guidelines.

A number of holistic veterinarians recommend feeding a raw-meat diet; Dr. Pitcairn is one of them (in fact, one of the first). If you decide to feed your dog raw meat, remember that some meats, such as pork and fish, should be cooked slightly to kill any parasites that may be present. Also, remember that an all-meat diet will not provide your dog with all the nutrition it needs. For example, meat is full of protein, but it's light on calcium and other vitamins and minerals. Work with your vet to determine the proper balance. Or, if you would like to find a holistic vet in your area, you can find the membership listing of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association. Dr. Pitcairns' book also lists sources of special ingredients, such as kelp powder, which you may have some trouble finding in your local supermarket. You'll most likely be able to obtain the ingredients through your local natural food store.

If you don't want to commit to cooking for your Boxer on a regular basis, you can use the recipes to provide an occasional meal. After all, home cooking is a real treat even for a dog.

Obesity is a Growing Problem Americans have a weight problem, and so do their pets. In fact, between 25 and 44 percent of all dogs are overweight. Obesity is the leading nutritional disease in dogs today. A dog is considered obese when it weighs 20 percent more than the ideal for its breed. Ideally, male Boxers should weigh between 60 and 75 pounds, and females, between 60 and 65. So a male Boxer would be considered obese at about 81 pounds; a female, at about 75 pounds.

Signs of obesity include extra heaviness in the neck, shoulders and face and fat on the hips and at the tails base. Obese dogs may waddle rather than walk and have limited stamina for play. They may laze around a lot, too, looking for all the world like furniture instead of acting like energetic animals.