

Feeding The Fat-Prone Bulldog

Feed your Bulldog for good health and to prevent obesity.

Marcia King

Resist Temptation Maintaining a healthy weight, or especially, reducing weight in your Bulldog may not be easy. Its hard not to give in when your dog is pathetically licking the empty food bowl, searching in vain for one last morsel.

However, its not your Bulldog that's raiding the refrigerator, doling out the portions or sharing licks of ice cream or bites of cookies. Your Bulldog can't eat what you don't give it.

Maintain a steely resolve, and remember, in exchange for quantity of food, you're giving your Bulldog its best shot for a long and healthy life. Those benefits outweigh extra biscuits, any time!

Sensible Snacking Just because your dog is dieting doesn't mean it has to give up snacks and treats. You can still offer food rewards while training, share bits from the table or hand out a bedtime biscuit, as long as you are sensible about it and count these items as part of the dogs overall caloric intake not as extras.

Says Jeff Werber, D.V.M., of Century Veterinary Clinic in Los Angeles, California, Keep track of the calories in the snacks. Some biscuits have enough calories in 10 of them to satisfy the caloric requirements of a large dog for the entire day. If you don't make the necessary reduction in your dogs normal food and you give it three biscuits a day, you've just added 30 percent more calories. Check the label to see if calorie amounts are listed; if not, contact the manufacturer and ask.

Quinton Rogers, Ph.D., of Davis, California, agrees. Know how many treats or table items you are feeding and decrease the amount of food, accordingly. Virtually all pet foods are over-formulated with vitamins and minerals to some extent. You can feed 10 or 15 percent of total calories from any type of food and that won't hurt, as long as you reduce the amount of the dog food you are giving by the same number of calories.

What kind of snacks should you give your dog? Chuck Keiser, D.V.M., of Heartland Veterinary Hospital in Danville, Kentucky, likes to offer bits of vegetables or fruit, such as raw broccoli, carrots, strawberries and potatoes. They are 100 percent digestible and good nutrition, says Dr. Keiser.

Dr. Werber prefers to offer fussy eaters tiny pieces of lean turkey as training rewards. He also notes that a few companies make fruit- and vegetable-based treats, rather than meat-based. These treats don't have that meat smell, so you might have to break a little piece off and put it in their mouths at first. Once they taste it, they'll probably start eating it. Dr. Rogers recommends reduced-calorie treats. He also notes that some treats are labeled complete and balanced a good choice if you give your dog a lot of treats. He also recommends veggie snacks as a reduced-calorie alternative.

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