

## Feeding The Fat-Prone Bulldog

**Feed your Bulldog for good health and to prevent obesity.**

*Marcia King*

What kind of diet should you provide your Bulldog? Nutritionally, whether your dogs food is dry, canned or frozen doesn't really matter, although dry food has the added advantage of helping to keep teeth clean. Dry food is also cheaper per volume and easy to store. Frozen and canned foods may be more palatable, but they cost more. These foods are also generally more calorically dense and can stick to the teeth in the back of the mouth, thereby contributing to dental disease.

Homemade Diets Homemade diets are generally not suggested. There is nothing wrong with homemade diets if they're complete and balanced, says Quinton R. Rogers, Ph.D., professor of physiological chemistry at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, and a member of the Feline Nutrition Expert Subcommittee. But homemade diets are not as easy to formulate as you might think, says Dr. Rogers, who is also co-developer of the minimal nutritional requirements for pets for the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council. The difficulty lies in providing not only the correct balance of protein, carbohydrates and fat, but also including the correct amounts of all the vitamins, minerals and other micro-nutrients essential to canine health. If you believe you must provide a homemade diet for your dog, consult with a veterinary nutritionist to obtain recipes that are balanced and contain all the necessary nutrients.

If you are going to feed a commercially-made dog food, you need to decide what kind or brand to feed. Generally speaking, Dr. Rogers says, no one brand diet is better than another for the health of the animal, if the diet is complete and balanced as determined by an AAFCO [Association of American Feed Control Officials] feeding protocol. You can confirm this by looking for the AAFCO statement on the food label proclaiming that the diet has passed an AAFCO feeding trial.

During an AAFCO feeding trial, the test diet is offered as the sole source of nutrition for a minimum of six months. For a food to pass the trial, pets must maintain certain weight or growth standards, have normal blood values, and not display clinical signs of nutritional deficiency or toxicity. When a food passes the trial and is labeled complete and balanced it means the product contains adequate levels of all required nutrients and the proper proportions of these nutrients. While you are looking at the label, note the Guaranteed Analysis (minimum and maximum pet tolerances determined for each nutrient) and keep in mind that less fat equals fewer calories because fat has a higher caloric density.