

Feed Your Collie Right

Customized nutrition is the foundation for your dog's health.

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Choosing the right food for your Collie is one of the most important jobs you have as a dog owner. Its also enjoyable--few things equal a dogs enthusiasm for delicious food. And although you're not likely to bound around the kitchen barking about it, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that tasty food will provide your Collie with all the nutrition it needs for a healthy, happy life.

Treat Your Collie Snacking is as popular with dogs as it is with their owners. Its okay to treat your Collie occasionally, as long as you make healthy choices.

When you shop for store-bought treats, be sure to check out the nutritional information on the label, just as you would with a main-course dog food. Select crunchy treats rather than chewy ones. Crunchy treats provide chewing exercise and usually have less sugar than chewy treats features that promote dental health and weight control.

For treats that are almost as convenient as commercial products (and a lot less expensive), look in your own kitchen. Some suggestions include:

Vegetables: These can be cooked, raw or even frozen; examples: carrots, broccoli stems, green beans, frozen peas.

Fruits: Small chunks of fruit are extremely popular with some dogs. Use sparingly to avoid digestive upset; examples: small pieces of apple, pear or banana.

Breads, crackers, dry cereal and other snack foods: Choose unsweetened, low-fat, whole-grain products; examples: bread chunks, croutons, whole-wheat crackers.

Meat treats: This is the good stuff, in your Collies opinion. Use small chunks of cooked lean meat. Some owners bake liver or slices of canned dog food, or form it into small meatballs to make treats. Processed meats, such as bologna and hot dogs, are okay if they're lean and aren't loaded with sugar, salt and preservatives.

Special note: Some people food can be dangerous for dogs. Don't feed your Collie chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins or macadamia nuts. They've all been associated with toxic reactions ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to death.

If you like to cook, you might prepare some Collie treats using recipes specifically formulated for dogs.

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