

The Doberman Pinscher Diet

Help your dog be all it can be by feeding nutrient-rich meals.

By Christina Cox-Evick

In today's fast-paced society, what we feed our dogs is often inadvertently dictated more by convenience than by nutritional concerns. This is unfortunate, because many of the qualities so admired in a breed like the Doberman Pinscher directly result from a healthy diet containing proper nutrients. Without a diet that provides an optimum level of protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals, your dog will lack the rippling muscles, patent-leather coat and keen alertness that have made this breed so popular.

Important points to consider when deciding upon a dog's diet include its age, activity, energy level, metabolism and exposure to stress. Logically, the Doberman covering miles in a search for a lost child has different dietary demands than the one snoozing happily on the couch. Learning a few basics about canine nutrition will help you choose just the right food for your dog. With a healthy diet, your Doberman can shine in whatever activity the two of you undertake.

Companion Dog Basics The first rule of thumb in finding the right food for your Doberman, be it a companion, show or working dog, is to find a quality commercial food that offers an ample supply of meat protein. Start by reading package labels.

Companies are required to list individual ingredients in descending order by weight. To find a meat-based diet, look for one that has a meat source as the first and preferably second ingredient. Better quality foods generally use complete grain sources, such as whole brown rice or oatmeal, rather than incorporating low-cost fillers such as cereal food fines, a by-product of the breakfast cereal industry. In the book, Earl Mindell's *Nutrition and Health for Dogs*, the author states, Ironically, what is considered the waste is the most nutritious part of the grain, but it still does not give you the complete balance of nutrients that whole grains do.

Packaged pet foods that use a consistent source of high-quality ingredients are called premium foods and can be found at health food stores, veterinarians' offices and pet supply markets. According to Doberman fancier Craig Clouse, D.V.M., co-owner of Twin Maples Veterinary Hospital in West Carrollton, Ohio, the digestibility of a diet is a crucial factor. Premium food manufacturers conduct ongoing studies to determine if dogs are able to nutritionally utilize the ingredients and formulations they are producing. If a dog cannot properly digest a diet, then it is not able to extract the nutrients it needs to maintain good health.