



# Nutrition and your pet



## **What is a complete diet?**

A complete diet is a food made from carefully selected ingredients which, when fed on its own, will provide all the nutrients that your pet needs in a palatable, nutritionally balanced format. A biscuit diet is also helpful in combating dental disease. Cats require 41 essential nutrients and dogs 37. Years of extensive and continuing research into nutrition enable pet food manufacturers to ensure that prepared pet food provides all the nutrients that pets need. Vets confirm nutritional disorders have decreased and it is accepted that pets live longer healthier lives. Prepared pet foods have played a key role in this.

## **Is it safe to feed home-made diet?**

Yes, as long as it is complete and balanced for the species, lifestage and lifestyle of the pet.

Formulating a complete and balanced diet in the home is possible, but complex, time consuming and very expensive.

## **Life Stages**

**0-12 months - Growth diet:** Growing dogs and cats require a diet high in energy, which is easily digestible and, most importantly, balanced. Small dogs require a different diet to larger breeds.



Calcium levels in the diet are particularly important for growing animals, too much results in over calcification of bones which could lead to conditions such as joint abnormalities and arthritis in later life. Too little calcium and bones could become weak and painful and liable to fracture.

**1-8 years - Maintenance diet:** An adult dog requires an energy content in its diet suitable for its lifestyle. It should also be completely balanced to ensure healthy bones, teeth and coat.

**8 years and beyond:** Dogs and cats at 8 years are classed as geriatric (being 56 in human years). At this time the body is in decline and the diet requires modification to help deal with this. Older animals require a diet lower in protein as the kidneys, which deal with the toxic breakdown products, are finding it more and more difficult to filter out these toxins. Reducing the amount of toxins the kidneys have to deal with extends the life of your pet.

Senior pets also require a diet lower in salt and phosphorus to reduce the stress on their hearts. High digestibility is essential for an older animal to absorb all the goodness it can from its food. The easiest way to ensure your pet gets the correct diet for its lifestyle is to speak to your vet or vet nurse who will advise you.

*For further information please ask at reception.*