

It can be very difficult to know what food is best for your pet when there is so much choice & it seems like everyone has an opinion on what you should (or shouldn't) feed your pet. The nutritional needs of your dog have evolved from the needs of a 'wild dog' or wolf, where they eat the entire body of their prey including skin, bones, muscle and intestinal contents. For your pet to receive all their dietary requirements you need to consider this evolution. It is therefore not surprising that meat alone (muscle) doesn't provide all your dog's nutrients. In recent years there has been a huge amount of research into canine nutrition resulting in production of diets which provide all your dog's needs. These diets have been shown to increase the life span & quality of life of those pets that eat it. We recommend super premium foods such as Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin and Eukanuba diets.

### The options that are available are:

**Home Prepared Diets** Can be very palatable depending on the ingredients used, but are usually not nutritionally complete, with the calcium/phosphorus balance and vitamin, mineral and fatty acid levels being particular problem areas. Dietary imbalances can result in many health problems, including bone disease in growing pups, skin and coat conditions, dental disease and intestinal disorders.

**Supermarket Foods** Usually provide your dog's basic nutritional needs but make use of cheaper ingredients such as cereals, offal and soybean products, resulting in reduced palatability and digestibility, flatulence and a larger volume of stools with more odour. Artificial colours and flavour enhancers are often used and the balance of fatty acids, vital for a healthy skin and coat, is not optimal.

**Premium Diets** HILLS SCIENCE DIET, ROYAL CANIN and EUKANUBA are quality pet foods available from veterinary clinics and some pet food stores. They are available in various formulations to suit dogs of all ages and activity levels, such as puppy, adult and low calorie, in both tinned and dried variety.

### These foods have the following advantages:

- All protein is of a high biological value, which means that the balance of amino acids matches the needs of your dog. Proteins used include chicken and egg, but not dairy products, which cause diarrhoea in some dogs, or soybean products, which do not contain all the amino acids that your dog needs and can interfere with digestion of other nutrients.
- No artificial colours or flavour enhancers are added.
- The fibre level is optimal. Too much dietary fibre results in reduced digestibility and interferes with the absorption of other nutrients.
- The fibre source is beet pulp, providing a blend of soluble and insoluble fibre, which promotes the health of the 'good bacteria' in the bowel. These bacteria prevent invasion of the bowel by harmful bacteria and produce acids which make the cells lining the bowel healthier. The health of the bowel is therefore improved. In fact, in many dogs, long term diarrhoea problems have been solved simply by switching to one of these diets.
- These diets have the correct balance of fatty acids for a healthy skin and coat and to help control inflammation and itching due to allergies.
- They are highly palatable which means less waste through uneaten food.

Diet is important for our pets, make sure that your pet is eating the most suitable diet for its breed & life stage - after all we are what we eat.....

If you have any further questions please ring or come in and see us for any help and advice.