

FINICKY EATER? OVERWEIGHT DOG?



HELP IS AT HAND!

A supplement to
The Complete Guide To Your Dog's Nutrition

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1

AWWWWW BUSTER COME ON – EAT!

There aren't too many dog owners that have not found themselves in the situation of hovering over their dog crooning and cajoling them to eat what is in their bowl. Then fussing about trying to find something the dog will eat. Well, there you go, the dog has you trained. Trained to get it food it likes rather than what is in the bowl. Your dog knows that if it waits long enough, sure enough, something really tasty shows up. Mission accomplished. Owner happy, dog happy and dog just won round one. Many owners are fixated on their dog's eating habits. That only makes things get worse and worse.

Owners of finicky eaters are constantly changing their diet to get them to eat. This only makes your dog hold out to see if anything better is being offered. Find and stick with a nutritious diet for your pet.

If you make sudden diet changes, this causes digestive upsets for your dog. Any diet changes need to be done slowly. Add a small amount of new food to your pet's current food and gradually increase that amount while decreasing the amount of the current food over a seven to ten day period. But right now what we are discussing is NOT catering to a fusspot – so changing foods constantly isn't going to help matters any.

Finicky eaters are not born! They are made. Yes it is hard to see that sweet face sitting there with a stricken look on his face, begging you for "food" – even though the bowl HAS food in it. You worry about whether he is going to get hungry, and just want to make sure he eats, and so we give in going against our better judgment and find something "special". As you might have guessed, this kind of behavior is not just a one-time thing. Once your dog knows it can wrangle something else out of you, it will keep on keeping on until it gets right out of hand. And if you think feeding him later will be easier, think again. It only gets worse. This type of behavior needs to be nipped in the bud immediately. Besides, who is the Alpha dog here anyhow – YOU or the dog?

You have likely also been in the situation where you have purchased a whole swack of types of dog food (canned and dry) to let your dog figure out what he likes. Not a good idea, because if he doesn't like anything, three guesses who will be running out and trying to find something better. Right – you! Chances are also that your dog loves people food. Uh-huh! This also isn't a

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good idea either. Really, if you were a dog wouldn't YOU want to have the steak on the table rather than the kibble in the bowl?

If you have a dog like this (finicky eater) in the majority of cases, you've wound up using Unintentional Negative Training to cement poor eating habits in your dog. It is unintentional because you didn't intend to train your dog to be fussy about food. It's negative because of the reinforcements given to the dog – the pleading, hovering etc. and it's training as ALL of our interactions with dogs (and vice versa) is education or training.

So – what do you do then?

SOLUTIONS

Well let's take a look at what you can do to stop this type of behavior. First thing is, if you can manage it don't even let it get started. If it happens there are things you can do to stop it.

The basic rule of thumb is if your dog is hungry enough, they WILL eat no matter what is in the bowl. You just have to make up your mind to wait him out. Have patience and ye shall be rewarded. Don't hover, plead, cajole, hand feed him out of the bowl, add anything to it or change the food. Just leave it in the bowl and ----- WAIT!! Note: the exception to this rule is when a dog who normally has good eating habits doesn't eat, then look for medical reasons.

This isn't to say that over time you can't decide to change his food, as many dog owners will do that so their dog has a variety in their diet. Makes sense when you think about it, because who in their right mind would WANT to eat the same meal twice a day for X number of years? If you wouldn't want to do that, then neither would your dog.

This is the point to mention that you will likely want to feed your dog high end holistic commercial food and/or a homemade (BARF or raw) diet. If you want your dog to EAT with gusto, these foods will guarantee that happens. So when you do decide to switch (commercial foods) then you will still have the same high quality you have come to appreciate. The results of feeding this type of diet will show clearly in your dog's good health, coat, attitude and energy levels.

If on the other hand you are just switching to see what your dog likes and trying to give him choices, then you may be creating a monster. Your pet will only demand as much variety as he's come to expect. If he expects lots of variety, he may just become finicky. And perhaps he already has, or you would not be reading this book thinking "Holy cow – that's Farley to a T!"

Table Scraps

Don't do it! Plain and simple don't start the habit of feeding the dog from the table. You WILL live to regret it later. Not to mention the fact that what we eat is NOT a good diet for your dog – not unless it is raw (BARF diet).

Homemade diets are different than feeding table scraps.

Feeding scraps isn't recommended, as they are high in fat and deficient in nutrients. What your dog needs is a full range of proper nutrients in the right amounts in an easily digestible format.

Table scraps DO have their good points. There is an enormous difference between **good quality leftovers** and "scraps". The quality leftovers are the pieces of steak (trimmed of fat), roast beef, chicken or turkey. Adding this to your dog's bowl is fine, only when done IN MODERATION. In addition leftover pasta, and rice are good, so long as they are minus the butter or other fatty sauces and are plainly cooked. Don't over feed scraps on a continuous basis. A diet too high in fat will cause stomach upsets, diarrhea and other potentially serious gastrointestinal disorders such as pancreatitis which is life threatening.

A Schedule

The value of having your dog on a timetable can't be over emphasized. Dogs thrive on routine, and besides, if you don't establish a routine and stick to it, your dog will implement one himself. Dogs without routines and a "pack leader" take over the roles themselves and you won't like the consequences. If you feed regularly at the same time (or close to it) daily then when the food hits the floor then your dog will be there to eat it – and will in fact learn to anticipate being fed. If you never thought dogs (or other animals) could tell time, try missing your regular feeding time one day.

Here is the most effective thing to do when you feed a finicky dog. Feed at the regular time and if they do not eat the food within 15 minutes, you take the bowl up and put the food back in the fridge. The next time that bowl comes out and goes down on the floor is the second feeding of the day. Period! Watch how fast your dog catches on to the fact if he doesn't eat when the food is there, it's GONE.

Do NOT keep offering it every hour throughout the day. All he learns then is to eat when he wants to eat and he's just succeeded in winning round two if you let him. You aren't going to be able to offer your dog his food hourly every day to see if he will eat, not if you work or have a life. So for your own sake and his, set a schedule and stick to it. Regular mealtimes promote good digestion and good general health.

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Be on the look out for the "sneaky" treater in your family. The sneaky treater can sabotage all your planning and meals by sneaking your dog treats without rhyme or reason, or feeding them from the table without regard to what you are trying to accomplish with your dog. In other words, the sensible eating program you are trying to set up will not work worth a darn if someone is giving out treats or table goodies willy-nilly.

By the way if your dog happens to be a member of the Garbage Raiders, make sure that habit is stopped cold. Keep your cans firmly closed with those snap down lids, and don't let your dog roam the neighborhood investigating other people's garbage. Garbage may not only cause digestive upsets but your dog also runs the risk of consuming toxic or contaminated food or chemicals.

There most definitely are times and circumstances when you would expect your dog to be finicky. For instance, many dogs eat less during the hot summer months. Some dogs will eat less to control their caloric intake. It's important that you feed your pet a high-quality, balanced pet food and stick with it. Lighten up on the treats given throughout the day as well until you have him on a well-oiled feeding schedule and he's not giving you grief over what you're feeding him.

2

BUSTER YOU'RE FAT!

It's likely not going to come as much of a surprise to you that if you have a finicky eater in your house (uhhm – the DOG!!) that this same finicky eater is going to likely wind up waaaaay over weight. It would be hard NOT to get over weight when your diet keeps changing. Fact of the matter is the pet population (canine/feline) is facing a battle with obesity thanks to many factors, including spay/neuter, medications for an illness, inactivity, and over feeding/constantly switching to get the finicky eater to eat.

Maybe this won't raise any eyebrows either, but it should. Statistics show that a recent pet population survey in the USA showed that 40 percent of the pets are over weight. So if Buster is fat, then this chapter might help you put together a plan to help him lose weight.

THE CALORIE COUNT

Okay, the bottom line here is this. If your dog is over weight then it is eating more calories than he actually needs. Period! If your dog is over weight and is otherwise healthy then it is eating way too much. Certainly have him examined by your Vet to check for heart, thyroid or other metabolic disorders to rule out a possible medical cause. Be honest with your vet about how much or how little exercise your dog gets, how frequently he gets exercise, how much you feed him, what and when, and how often you do treat.

This is something a great many owners don't know, and should. Your dog (or cat) does NOT need to eat every day to be healthy. Why do we think they do? Because the pet food industry has implied to us that they do, and that is what the ads are based on – the wagging tail eager to eat dog. If your dog isn't interested in eating, then don't coach it to eat. (See chapter one for the makings of a finicky eater) In some instances your dog just doesn't want to eat the first time you feed it. So be it. Offer the food later and if he is hungry then, he will eat.

In actual fact many breeders will fast their dogs at least once a week for one day (if they are over a year old that is). It's good canine management that if you provide a good quality healthy holistic high-end commercial food or home made, with fresh water and appropriate supplement IF REQUIRED, your dog will eat when it wants to eat. And we don't mean random feeding, we mean at either one of the times you offer food twice daily.

THE SURGERY

It is a common myth that spay/neuter procedures cause obesity. The operation doesn't cause obesity, the "what you feed and how often" and level of exercise your dog doesn't have causes obesity. Any pet, fixed or not, will gain weight if it is overfed in relation to its level of activity. The TRUTH is the spay/neuter procedure(s) slightly slows the pet's metabolism (as does aging) and it will burn calories at a slower rate. That means they need less food.

THE EXCUSES

Really Buster hardly eats anything! If Buster hardly eats anything, then why is he at least 30 pounds over his healthy weight? Problem is he is a grazer who likely nibbles here and there all day from a bowl of food left out all the time. When the main meal arrives, he only picks and chooses the best bits and leaves the rest. Why? He's not hungry because he's been eating ALL day.

Or how about this one: Buster won't shut up unless I give him a treat and he won't settle at night unless he gets his special smokie sausage. Bravo for Buster who has successfully learned that if he kicks up a fuss he will get a reward. Talk about negative conditioning here. The owner hasn't trained Buster properly to have some manners and instead Buster is being rewarded for being a nuisance – a nuisance who will get fat if he keeps eating like that.

This is a quite common one a lot of vet's hear too. He's such a good dog, we really love him a lot and don't want him to miss out on his special treats. There is love for the canine in that home, but too much love of the feeding kind. Everyone has a hand in treating the dog, which is a wonderful thing, but the treats add up to pounds in the long run. Instead of showing affection with treating, throw in some physical activity and play tag or chase the ball, and then reward with a small treat. Above all else, and we touched on this in Chapter 1, don't have everyone treat the dog all day every day. Get everybody on the same page and get organized about it. Your dog will thank you for it – and so will your vet who will see a healthy, optimal weight dog instead of a whale in dog's fur.

And the classic excuse for over weight dogs is the one that goes (remember this from Chapter 1?) Buster won't eat dog food. Oh really? Then what does Buster eat? You got it, table scraps and whatever it wants. Once again the dog has succeeded in training the owners to give it what IT wants. And it worked, but the dog is paying the price for it physically. Hard not to overeat when you're getting the "select" goodies isn't it? Remember this, it is NOT up to the DOG to choose what it eats in your house – it is up to YOU – the

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owner. And you choose the best high quality nutritious feed on the market or make it at home.

BUSTER YOU NEED EXERCISE AND LESS FOOD

Just a note before we cover what you can do to help your dog lose weight. When you take your dog to the Vet to talk about his excess baggage, ask to have a test done for hypothyroidism. Even if your dog doesn't "LOOK" like they have it, get the test done anyway. It would be a waste of time to try to lose weight if your dog DOES have it.

First take a good hard look at the food you are feeding. The FIRST ingredients present in the bag of food should be MEAT or meat products, NOT grains like corn. Do your research and find a good high quality food e.g. Innova, Innova Evo, Life's Abundance, etc.

Second always have water and lots of it on hand.

Third remember dogs don't HAVE to eat every day. (exception to that rule would be really small breeds)

Fourth, ask the vet about supplements and whether or not they are necessary depending on what you have decided to feed your dog. In most cases if you are feeding high quality foods, you won't need to supplement, but it never hurts to ask. If you have chosen to go the BARF (raw food) route, then supplements may be an issue depending on what you are feeding and the kind of variety you are offering your dog. Do NOT over supplement!!!!

Before you and Buster start your weight loss journey, get an accurate record of his weight. Then, reduce his total daily ration by one third. That includes his total daily intake like treats and snacks. At this point, since you are trying to help him LOSE weight, you'd think you would NOT be giving him left-overs. At the end of two weeks, weigh him again. In the meantime, if he begs – do NOT give in.

If Buster had lost weight at the end of the two weeks, then stick to this schedule. If he hasn't lost any weight, reduce his intake by another one third and also find out if someone else in the house is treating or snacking Buster and not telling you. Once you've read them the RIOT ACT, start again and keep track.

If you're wondering about low cal diets for dogs, you CAN get them, but many vets don't like to recommend them as they have very restricted fat levels BUT because the fat is reduced the carbs are increased. Increased carb production produces extra insulin that tells the dog's body to store the

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unused calories as fat. Talk about a vicious cycle!! If this happens, then your dog actually gains weight on a low cal diet. What you need is what was discussed earlier, a meat based diet, high in protein and fat and low in carbs.

CONCLUSION

Although it's darned hard to stare your dog down over his bowl of kibble when he wants more and you KNOW he shouldn't have any more, it's something you will need to do if you want your dog to look and feel his best.

This same observation also applies when you are faced with a dog that doesn't want to eat what is in his bowl. Harden your heart and stick to the canine basics of good nutritious food and water (with some treats added into the mix now and then) and THIS will keep your dog on the right track to health and well-being.

It won't hurt in the least if you decide to also take your dog for more walks, play more, carouse more, chase balls and play tug with a chew. After all, isn't that what having a dog is about? Sharing?

It really IS all about diet!

It really IS about exercise, play, loving, sharing, nutrition and quality care.

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