



## Feeding Ideas for the Picky Eaters

Picky eaters are frustrating, time consuming, expensive to feed and more likely to have medical problems associate with their digestive system than dogs that eat regularly and consistently. Teaching a dog to eat well is easiest taught during puppyhood, but older dogs can also learn to become better eaters too. It takes patience and persistence.

For the puppy, begin by selecting a high quality dry puppy food. Depending on the age and breed of your puppy, put the food down 2-4 times a day for 10-15 minutes at a time. Encourage the puppy to eat, (some won't need any help.) After the food has been available for a short period of time, pick it up and offer fresh food at the next scheduled mealtime. Most pups will learn to eat on a schedule within days.

The benefits to teaching your puppy to eat regularly include:

- ✓ Easier housetraining
- ✓ Better control of how much is eaten every day
- ✓ Better control of their body weight
- ✓ Assurance the puppy is truly eating, especially in multi-dog households
- ✓ Will make travel, boarding or hospitalization less stressful
- ✓ Gives you and your pup something to look forward to every single day.

Special attention needs to be given to very young puppies, especially of the toy breeds. They need frequent small meals to prevent life-threatening hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Adding water or puppy milk replacer to their dry food will make eating easier for these little ones. Regular cow's milk frequently causes diarrhea and should be avoided. Adding canned food in limited quantities is also fine.

### Eat it or lose it

Convincing an adult dog (that has already trained the humans into offering many foods and extras) to eat on a defined schedule is a lot tougher. They should have a current physical exam and be on a diet appropriate for their age and weight. The method of teaching them to eat on a schedule is the same as for puppies. Put the food down twice a day for a period of time and then remove it. Some dogs will not "give in" to this method for days. Be sure they are drinking plenty of water and they are behaving as usual. If begging is a problem, feeding them in another room when the rest of the family eats is a good idea.

Case example-"Lotto" was a 2 year old Border Collie that was being coaxed and coddled into eating his dry food twice a day by his human playing with the food and burying tennis balls in the bottom of the bowl. "Lotto" preferred to just stand over the bowl and growl so the other dog wouldn't come over and eat it. He was started on the "eat it or lose it" plan and in about 5 days was eating all his food at every meal without coaxing and tricks.