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Senior Pet Nutrition

There are an increasing number of pet food labels on the shelves of pet stores claiming to be designed for specific life stages, not to mention breeds, of pets. Beware: These labels are no more than a marketing ploy to increase shelf space for a brand of food. Dogs' and cats' fundamental nutritional requirements do not change with age. Rather, a high quality, high protein diet is appropriate for ALL breeds of dogs and cats at ALL ages. Don't buy into the myths!

Senior Pet Food Myth #1:

- Senior pets require less protein as they age.

This misconception has been perpetuated by big pet food manufacturers attempting to formulate special diets to compensate for damage done by a lifetime of consuming commercial dry food diets with low quality, rendered proteins. Such foods put undue strain on kidneys and livers, thereby resulting in compromised functioning. As a result, some senior pets are unable to handle the amount of protein they actually need, but their need for it has *not* changed. In fact, the need for high quality protein can increase as a pet ages since protein helps with regenerative functions.

Senior Pet Food Myth #2:

- All older dogs and cats are obese, so they should be fed a reduced-calorie diet.

Not all senior pets are overweight. In fact, some older pets become too thin due to decreased appetite and reduced sense of smell and taste. Therefore, feeding a “senior pet food” with lower calories is not the answer. For overweight pets at any age, the key to health is portion control of a high-quality diet and regular exercise.

Senior Pet Food Myth #3:

- Senior pet food has extra fiber which all senior pets require.

Added fiber in pet food may cause your pet to poop more, but too much fiber can render him unable to assimilate the antioxidants, vitamins and minerals he needs. Constipation can be prevented by feeding a high-quality, moisture-rich diet, such as *Steve's Real Raw Food*, *Primal*, or *Stella & Chewy's raw diet*, including probiotics and digestive enzymes, such as *Nature's Farmacy's Digestive Enhancer* or *Probiotic Max*, and getting plenty of exercise. As needed, *Nummy Tum Tum Canned Pumpkin* or *Fruitables' Pumpkin Digestive Supplement* is a great source of fiber to add to your pet's diet.

Senior Pet Food Myth #4:

- Senior pet food has the added joint and omega supplements that seniors need.

Although many commercial dry foods have added supplements, they are not in the amounts needed or in a highly bio-available format. Instead, adding high quality supplements, such as *Phyto Flex*, *Joint Support*, *Ultra Oil*, and *Grizzly Salmon Omega Oil* to a fresh food diet offers far more benefits and support for your pet's needs.

<https://www.onlynaturalpet.com/holistic-healthcare-library/food-diet---general/253/pet-food-life-stages-do-they-matter.aspx>

<https://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/06/20/aging-pet-food.aspx>

*This sheet is for basic technical information only. We encourage you to continue your own research on these subjects.