

<https://www.deuka.de/en/current/changing-the-dogs-diet/>

This way you avoid side effects:

## CHANGING YOUR DOG'S DIET



There are always situations in a dog's life that make a change of food necessary. Reasons include age, illness or a food intolerance. To avoid undesirable consequences such as diarrhoea and flatulence as far as possible, you should not change your dog's food abruptly, but over a period of several days or even weeks. A simple scheme has proven to be effective for a successful change of food.

### When does it make sense to change your dog's food - and when not?

There are many good reasons for changing your dog's diet. **What they don't need is a lot of variety in their diet.** We should not take ourselves as an example and think that the same food is always boring. Dogs cannot be compared with us in this respect. **If they like a certain food, they look forward to it every day anew.** As long as this is the case, your dog likes the food and it provides him with all the important nutrients, you should not experiment and avoid unnecessary food changes.

You can provide a little variety by **offering your dog a different flavour from time to time.** If he eats and tolerates these flavours well, you can expand the range of nutrients on offer. However, this is not necessary with a complete food. But you may find that he likes a different type of meat even better than the one you have been offering.

## Changing food for puppies

### Weaning from mother's milk

The most frequent changes in food occur during puppyhood. The first is when puppies are **weaned from their mother's milk.** From the 4th week of life, it becomes increasingly difficult for the bitch to feed all the puppies sufficiently. Then it is time to start feeding solid food. Initially only once or twice a day, but over the course of the next three to four weeks the requirement increases until the puppies are finally weaned and the transition to a puppy food is complete.

### Change of food in the new home

The next change of food is already lurking when a puppy moves into its new home at two to three months old. This is because the new dog owners may have different ideas about nutrition than the breeder or an animal shelter. **A change of food may be understandable, but you should wait a few weeks before doing so!** The loss of a mother and siblings, familiar people, a long journey, new surroundings and new people can cause a lot of excitement. This can quickly upset the stomach. Changing your pet's food at this stage can lead to diarrhoea and other digestive problems. **It is better to wait until your little friend has settled in well and only then make a gradual change.**



Only start changing your dog's food as soon as he has settled into his new home (©Deutsche Tiernahrung Cremer).

### Switch to an adult dog food

All puppies have another change of food when their puppy phase comes to an end and they grow up. A high-quality puppy food provides plenty of energy to give them the energy they need to play and grow. **As soon as they are fully grown, you should switch to an Adult dog food (e.g. FIETE Adult Chicken & Duck).** This is optimised for the nutritional requirements of adult dogs.

When this time has come for your dog depends mainly on its size: **Small dogs are often mature at 10 to 12 months, medium-sized dogs at around 14 months. Large dogs, on the other hand, may not make a**

suitable transition **until they are 16 to 18 months old**. A **good guide** is **puberty**, which is signalled by the first bleeding in females and the lifting of the leg in males.

## Side effects of changing a dog's diet

Some dogs can eat what they want and have no digestive problems at all. But this is not always the case. **Typical side effects** of a change of food in dogs are **diarrhoea, flatulence, soft faeces, stomach rumbling, vomiting and loss of appetite**. Black faeces, on the other hand, which is occasionally observed in this context, is atypical. It is usually more an indication of blood in the stool. In this case, discuss with your vet whether he or she would advise you to take a stool sample. The typical side effects of a change of food usually disappear within a few days. If not, you should also consult your vet in this case.

## How long does it take to change a dog's diet?

It is not advisable to **change your dog's food abruptly** from one day to the next. This **increases the risk of side effects**. It is better to allow the dog's organism a transition period. It can then slowly adapt to the composition and processing of the new food and the optimal utilisation of the **nutrients**.

**the period in which the change of food should take place depends on the dog and the type of change.**

Some dogs are very sensitive to nutrition. More transition time should be planned for them than for dogs that hardly ever have digestive problems. **The average is to change the food over a period of four weeks:**



If your dog accepts the new food well and without problems, you can also change the food more quickly (©Deutsche Tiernahrung Cremer).

1. Week	¼ new food   ¾ old food
2. Week	½ new food   ½ old food
3. Week	¾ new food   ¼ old food
4. Week	100 % new feed

If your dog reacts problematically to food changes, you can **double the transition period** or extend it even further. It is also important to bear this in mind: **Changing food within a brand** from a puppy food to an adult dog food is usually **much easier** than, for example, switching from a wet food from one brand to a dry food from another manufacturer. Here, the dog is faced with a different consistency as well as possibly a different product selection and composition. For a **sensitive dog**, you **may have to allow several weeks** for a change of food of this kind.

Basically, you have the option of mixing the new food with the existing food. Or you can offer it in a separate bowl and see whether your dog is interested in it or leaves it alone.

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You can provide a little variety by **offering** your dog **a different flavour** from time to time. If he eats and tolerates these flavours well, you can expand the range of nutrients on offer. However, this is not necessary with a complete food. But you may find that he likes a different type of meat even better than the one you have been offering so far.

### Reasons for a change of food:

- the puppy is growing up
- Entry into the senior age
- Switch to a higher quality food
- Overweight
- Illness (kidney, intestine)
- Food allergy
- Food intolerance
- Dental problems

## Is a change of food necessary for overweight dogs?

Many dogs are too fat. However, this is **no reason to immediately switch to a diet food for dogs!** Ideally, you should first check the overall situation regarding your four-legged friend's diet. First and foremost, you should keep an eye on the **daily treat ration**. For many dog owners, this is a little too generous, which can be the reason for obesity. The same applies to the food ration. Take a look at the **recommendations on your dog food**. You may be exceeding them and a small reduction may be enough. You should also think about whether you are **giving your dog enough physical exercise**. The less he moves, the less energy he consumes. This should be taken into account when calculating the amount of food.

If none of the above points apply to your dog, you should take him to the vet. They can determine whether a **disease is responsible for the excess weight**. In this context, it may be advisable to switch to a diet food. **However, it is often sufficient to adjust the ration or increase physical exercise.**

## Switching between wet and dry food

You can reduce any existing digestive problems if you do not switch between **wet and dry food**.

Sometimes, however, switching is unavoidable because, for example, your dog's dental health makes it difficult to bite dry food. As the moisture content of dry and wet food differs greatly, the **digestive system is particularly challenged when switching**. Depending on the food, the body now needs significantly **less or more moisture** in the form of absorbed water. The **portion sizes and nutrient density** also **differ** significantly. So don't be surprised if side effects occur. These are not uncommon. Don't rush things, but give your dog **enough time** to change food. The easier the changeover is for him, the quicker he will accept the new food.

### Conclusion:

- You should only **change a puppy's food** once **it has settled in well**.
- **Small dogs** grow up earlier than **largedogs**. A change to an adult dog food is recommended at around **10 to 12 months**, for **medium-sized dogs at around 14 months** and for **large dogs at 18 months**.
- A change of food can lead to side effects such as **diarrhoea, flatulence and stomach rumbling**.
- The more nutritionally sensitive a dog is, the longer the gradual change of food should take. On average, **four weeks** has proven to be a good length of **time**.
- **Food changes** should **only** be made **for a good reason**. This does not include wanting to offer the dog as much variety as possible in its diet.

### FAQs

#### When does a change of food bring about an improvement?

For many dogs, a change of food can be implemented within a few days without any side effects. For some dogs, however, it can take several weeks before they no longer have diarrhoea.

#### What problems can occur when changing food?

Slight digestive problems are not uncommon when changing food. However, in rare cases it can also happen that a dog cannot tolerate a new food. Contact your vet if you have any problems.

#### When to switch to senior dog food?

Large dog breeds are considered oldies from the age of six to eight. For small dog breeds, a change to senior food is only sufficient at ten to twelve years of age.

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