

# Dinnertime

Eating the right food is extremely important for a pet to stay healthy. Dogs and cats need a complete and balanced diet that contains all the necessary nutrients. Freshwater should be available to your pets inside and outside at all times. Adult pets can be fed one or two meals a day. Puppies and kittens often need three or four small meals a day. Always leave feeding time to the grown-ups, as pets can be very protective of their food.

Any food that is left out for more than two hours can contain bad **bacteria** (single-cell organisms that can cause disease). So, if your pet does not eat all its food, ask a grown-up to throw the food away.

Care must be taken when feeding pets home-cooked meals. Certain foods can be **poisonous** (harmful), raw meat can carry bad bacteria, and cooked bones can cause stomach problems and wear down teeth. Some bones, like raw chicken wing tips and long beef rib bones, may be acceptable in small amounts. Creating a nutritionally balanced home-cooked meal for pets can be difficult, as they have different dietary needs than we do.



Let your dog or cat eat without being disturbed. Do not sneak up on it or put your hand near the bowl when the pet is eating.

