

Problems Related to Pet Malnutrition

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Received: April 27, 2020; **Published:** June 10, 2020

Nowadays, our chores have led us to more simplified and easy pet management practices.

With a gigantic range of food and snacks for dogs and cats offered on the market, with selected and properly balanced ingredients, there are still those who provide conventional food to the animals and understand themselves food!

The skin is a large and quite active organ from a metabolic point of view, with high demand for amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. Any imbalance in the intake of these nutrients disrupts the protective function of the skin immune barrier, which makes the animal more susceptible to infections and allergic reactions.

It is common for veterinarians, when faced with a patient with skin impairment, to suspect allergies, parasitics or infectious diseases, disregarding the nutritional aspect. Many clinical cases, however, may be due to malnutrition, which is aggravated by secondary skin contamination by bacteria, fungi and parasites, favored by the immunosuppressive process originated by nutritional deficiency.

The nutritional variations are much more stark between distinct physiological stages than between nutritional needs between different species, at the same physiological stage.

Growth is one of the most nutritionally critical periods, and it is necessary to cover all animal requirements for good performance while avoiding overconsumption. Underconsumption leads to generic weight loss, dermatological problems, etc., while an unbalanced diet can lead to specific problems. A home-cooked diet based on beef may lead to a calcium deficiency with osteoarthritis, poor habits, lower growth and worsening dysplasia (in predisposed breeds).

On the other hand, overconsumption can also lead to serious problems, especially in large or giant breeds

In adulthood, it is important to observe the nutritional requirements according to changes in the degree of activity, race, room temperature, among other factors.

In Brazil dogs are usually bred as pets (little activity) or territorial guard (light to medium activity). Adequate nutrition at this stage, the longest of all physiological stages, will be determinant in ensuring health and longevity to the animal.

Obesity is the most important nutritional problem in small animal clinics and has a firm tendency to a progressive increase related to the increase in the population of pets worldwide. Pets in large urban centers are increasingly concentrated in small spaces (apartments) and with sedentary life, and the conjunction of three factors; castration, high availability of food and inadequate management of the owner, greatly increases the onset of the disease.

In the pregnancy and lactation phases, physiological changes are immense and rapid, requiring careful nutritional management. Considering the high milk production of a bitch, depending on the size of the litter, in addition to the high energy value of milk, the energy needs during the lactation period are quite high.

Elderly animals, on the other hand, are tendency to taste loss, dental problems, chronic, hepatic and cardiac renal failure. Taking into account that the average life of a dog is around 12 to 15 years and cats 14, on average 7/8 years can already be considered animals in geriatric phase.

Therefore, some factors are important in the animal nutrition issue:

Requirement	Management Feed
Species	Species
Physiology	Life Phase
Life Phase	Health condition
Health condition	Habitat
Habitat	Lifestyle
Lifestyle	Owner

Factors influencing energy intake

Internal	External
Gastric distension	Availability of food
Physiological response to the appearance and odor of food	Time and quantity of food
Changes in plasma concentrations	Texture and composition of the food
	Food palatability.

Diseases associated with malnutrition

The severity of diseases is usually related to the degree of pet malnutrition. His health worsens as he becomes more fragile.

The 4 main diseases associated with poor feeding of the animal are:

1. **Allergies:** Some proteins and fatty acids can cause allergic processes in the most sensitive animals. Therefore, there are already several hypoallergenic foods on the market.

Food allergy can cause symptoms on the animal’s skin. Among them, redness or spots, in addition to breathing difficulties. There are several tests of allergies easy to perform. Just go to the vet to get the proper professional guidance.

2. **Diarrhea:** Diarrhea is the most common symptom of disorders in the digestive system of the animal.

May indicate intoxication, allergies, presence of intestinal parasites and food poisoning. Food-related diarrhea can be caused by an excess of proteins or fats. It can also be related to poor quality and incorrect preservation of food. In addition, the introduction of cooked foods or sudden changes in the animal’s diet can be problematic.

3. **Gastritis:** May be caused by reaction to bacterial antigens caused by internal worms and food intolerance.

Of course, food quality is critical. But it is also necessary to know how to preserve them by storing them in dry environments and protected from the sun. Otherwise, even the best of food can be contaminated with fungi and bacteria.

4. **Inflammation of the esophagus:** This is the least frequent of the four diseases we mentioned above, but it is severe and should receive proper attention.

It is mainly caused by ingestion of previously cooked bones. It is true that dogs have the ability to digest bones. However, only when they are raw, in their natural state. Cooked meat and bones can cause inflammation in the esophagus [1-5].

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Volume 5 Issue 7 July 2020

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