

Nutrients Matter: NC State Veterinary Nutrition Service

Planning for Change: Nutrition During Crisis

One of the most frequent questions we have been fielding lately is: how do pet owners continue providing for their pet's nutrition needs during times of challenge or crisis? This is not always an easy question, but one that should be considered for all of our furry (or feathered or scaled!) friends, not just those who are ill or fragile. Optimum nutrition will help both pets and people survive and thrive through these challenges. Your "Plan A" may be what you feed daily. Ideally, you should have at least a two-week advance supply of your pet's diet. This may mean freezing a large batch of your homemade diet or having an extra bag of the regular kibble!

However, we all know that life happens, and "Plan A" is not always attainable. So, what should "Plan B" include?

- Consider alternative foods or diets that may be appropriate for your pet.
- If you are feeding a homemade diet, are there other ingredients that can be utilized? Do you have more than one recipe to rely on? Can you explore other stores or supply avenues?
- Always discuss options with your primary veterinarian and/or your nutrition clinician (if you have an established client-patient relationship with a veterinary clinical nutritionist).

Preparing in advance for all pet needs can often be the foundation for how well our pets survive crisis or challenge. The following is a helpful resource for your checklist, including nutrition:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/index.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/emergencies/pet-disaster-prep-kit.html>

The NC State Veterinary Nutrition Service is here to care for pets and their families via comprehensive nutrition support plans. Information regarding how to request a consultation is located on our website and must be submitted by your primary veterinarian or veterinary specialist. Our team is comprised of the following individuals:

- Dr. Korinn Saker, DVM, Dipl. ACVN (director)
- Dr. Caitlyn Getty, DVM, PhD (resident)
- Dr. Emily Luisana, DVM (resident)
- Julie Nettifee, RVT, VTS (neurology)

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Patient Profile: Dinozzo's Weight Loss Journey

When Dinozzo arrived for consult with the NC State Veterinary Nutrition Service, he not only was facing challenges with obesity, but also challenges with other inflammatory disorders, eye disease, Cushing's disease and more. The nutrition resident developed customized homemade diet recipes, based on both medical needs and items Dinozzo would find tasty. As the journey began, family members shared updates and questions with the entire Nutrition Service, while at the same time fully committing to the nutrition support plan. Within months, a "new" Dinozzo emerged – with more energy, a slimmer physique, and a truly new "leash on life."



THEN



NOW

"Our journey with Dinozzo has been great, mostly due to the NC State Veterinary Nutrition Service. The campus is amazing with so many specialties, but the Nutrition department is one of a kind. We had our initial appointment with Dr. Getty who really made our 2-hr trip worth it. They went over all of our little buddy's medical information and really took the time to make a personalized plan-taking everything into account and continued to adapt his plan for the best outcome. The service nutrition technician and resident have been outstanding and extremely helpful. We are so happy our 8-year old pup is running and playing like he should be.

Our Vet is amazed, 30 lbs down to 19.5 lbs.

Truly Thankful. Go NC State!"

Achieving optimal weight for any companion animal has been shown in numerous studies to minimize or eliminate complications associated with being overweight or obese such as:

- Joint disease and arthritis
- Cardiac and respiratory concerns
- Chronic inflammation and metabolic conditions
- Decreased lifespan

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Interactive Feeding For Health and Fitness

Interactive feeding is a concept that includes fun and mentally stimulating exercises to enhance feeding and to engage the minds and bodies of our animal companions. Interactive feeding devices or toys are often puzzle or hide-and-seek type games that use brain power and dexterity to solve. The goal of solving the puzzle is typically to deliver part of their daily calories while also providing enrichment for the pet.

Notable health benefits of interactive feeding can include many of the following:

- Weight management by slowing down food intake and providing satiety throughout the day
- Cognitive enhancement by stimulating mental engagement to solve the puzzle
- Fulfillment of the pet's desire to hunt for or seek out their food, especially for our feline friends
- Providing overall enrichment and increased physical activity throughout the day



There are many interactive feeding devices available for purchase for cats and dogs. However, you can also make these games at home for your pets! You can create anything from a very simple toy to very complex puzzles.

Please follow this link for an example of an easy homemade toy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxQ0KOQJFfs>



Food Safety During Summer Months

It is always critical to ensure that all pet foods are handled and stored properly, but especially so during the warm summer months. Risks of improper storage include inactivation of beneficial nutrients, dangerous reactions within the food, bacterial contamination, or even infestation with pests

To avoid spoilage of your pet's food, always:

- Refrigerate or discard unused wet pet food
- Keep dry and canned pet food in a cool, dry place (less than 80° F)
- Store dry food in its original packaging inside a dedicated, sealed, and pest-proof container
- Keep pets away from food storage and prep areas

Learn more at the following:

<https://petfood.aafco.org/Product-Handling-Safety>

Red Bowl Fund: Supporting Research, Supporting Patients, Supporting Education

The NC State Veterinary Nutrition Service and Nutrition Comparative Research Program are supported by research funding from grants, individuals and through the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Foundation's, "Red Bowl Fund." This fund directly supports critical research in companion animal and comparative nutrition studies - studies that can benefit both animals and humans.

Studies have been supported in many areas, including aging, canine epilepsy, influence of nutrition and disease on the microbiome and more. Further, undergraduate students, veterinary students, and veterinary residents are supported through this fund as they seek to advance nutritional science at all levels. Additionally, outreach and education for pet owners also benefit from this funding source.

If you would like to partner with us or would like more details on the Red Bowl Fund through the NCVMF please email:

ncstateveterinarynutrition@ncsu.edu

