



HOW TO TRANSITION A DOG TO A NEW FOOD (OF THE SAME FORM)

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THE ISSUE

Domestic dogs usually eat a diet that's much less varied than the diets of their owners. The variety of most human diets often leads us to underestimate the impact of a diet change on dogs. Especially if your dog has been eating the same thing for a long time, its body is in balance with its current diet, and it will take time for him to achieve a new balance with a new diet. Transitioning him gradually reduces the disruption of the intestinal bacteria and the irritation of the digestive tissues that frequently result from rapid diet changes. The guidelines below are useful when transitioning a dog between two diets of the same form (from one kibble to a different kibble, for example). If you're transitioning a dog from one form to a different form (from kibble to raw, for example), ask us for a Mud Bay solution sheet specifically written for that transition.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN

If your dog refuses to eat for more than 48 hours, contact your veterinarian. If the diet transition leads to vomiting that continues for 24 hours after you stop feeding or begins again after you reintroduce food, contact your veterinarian.

THE SOLUTION

Almost all dogs do well with gradual diet transitions, but if your dog refuses to eat or develops vomiting, diarrhea, excess gas or constipation, you may be trying to transition him too quickly. If this happens, stop the transition and withhold food for 24 hours. After 24 hours, begin feeding frequent, small meals of his original diet. If all symptoms cease and he appears to be back to normal, you can re-start the transition a few days later, but with a more gradual approach. If the transition leads to vomiting that continues for 24 hours, contact your veterinarian.

1 Gradually transition to the new diet

- **Transitioning from one diet to another should take at least 7 days**—and it's fine to make the transition more gradual still. Mix the old and the new diets together as you gradually decrease the amount of old food and increase the amount of new.

Normal Transition Schedule

	Days 1-2	Days 3-4	Days 5-6	Day 7
OLD Diet	75%	50%	25%	
NEW Diet	25%	50%	75%	100%

- **Transitioning to a diet that's higher in fat takes longer.** If the fat level of the new diet is more than three percentage points (based on Dry Matter) higher than the fat level of your dog's current diet, your dog's pancreas will need much longer to increase its production of enzymes and enable your dog to safely make the transition.

	Day 1-14	Day 15-28	Day 29-42	Day 43
OLD Diet	75%	50%	25%	
NEW Diet	25%	50%	75%	100%

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2 Support your dog's digestive health through the transition

For many dogs, a gradual approach is sufficient to ensure a successful transition to a new food. But some dogs require—and almost every dog will benefit from—supplementation that strengthens its digestive health during the transition.

- **Supplement with prebiotics (a few days before starting the transition, if possible).** Prebiotics feed the good bacteria already in your dog's digestive tract. Prebiotics include fructooligosaccharides (FOS), inulin, oligofructose, chicory root, dandelion, burdock, wild yam, jicama, agave, and garlic.
- **Supplement with digestive enzymes.** Digestive enzyme supplements help the body digest food and are especially helpful to reduce the work load on the pancreas. Look for products with protease, amylase, cellulase or lipase.

3 What if your dog refuses to eat the new food?

Dogs can be very particular about what they will and won't eat, but with persistence it's almost always possible to find a variety of food options for a particular dog. The key is identifying what palatability triggers an individual dog has. Some dogs are motivated by smell—warming the food before serving may appeal to these dogs or adding a topper of dehydrated raw food or their favorite treat (please remember to either adjust the amount of food you're feeding for the extra calories in the topper or slowly decrease the amount of topper until the extras aren't needed anymore). Other dogs focus on texture—trying different sizes and shapes of kibble or trying cans of all different styles (chunks-and-gravy, pate, whole meat) usually leads to finding options that these dogs will happily eat.

RESULTS

Gradual transitions almost always lead to success. If you don't succeed the first time, stop, take a break, let your dog regain balance with his diet, support your dog's digestive system with supplements and then try again more gradually.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Mud Bay staffers are specifically trained to help owners transition their dogs to new foods. Muddies can also help you find the products that match the recommendation on this sheet, so if you need more help or information, please let us know.

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