

Dog a Picky Eater?

What to do

Is my dog a picky eater?

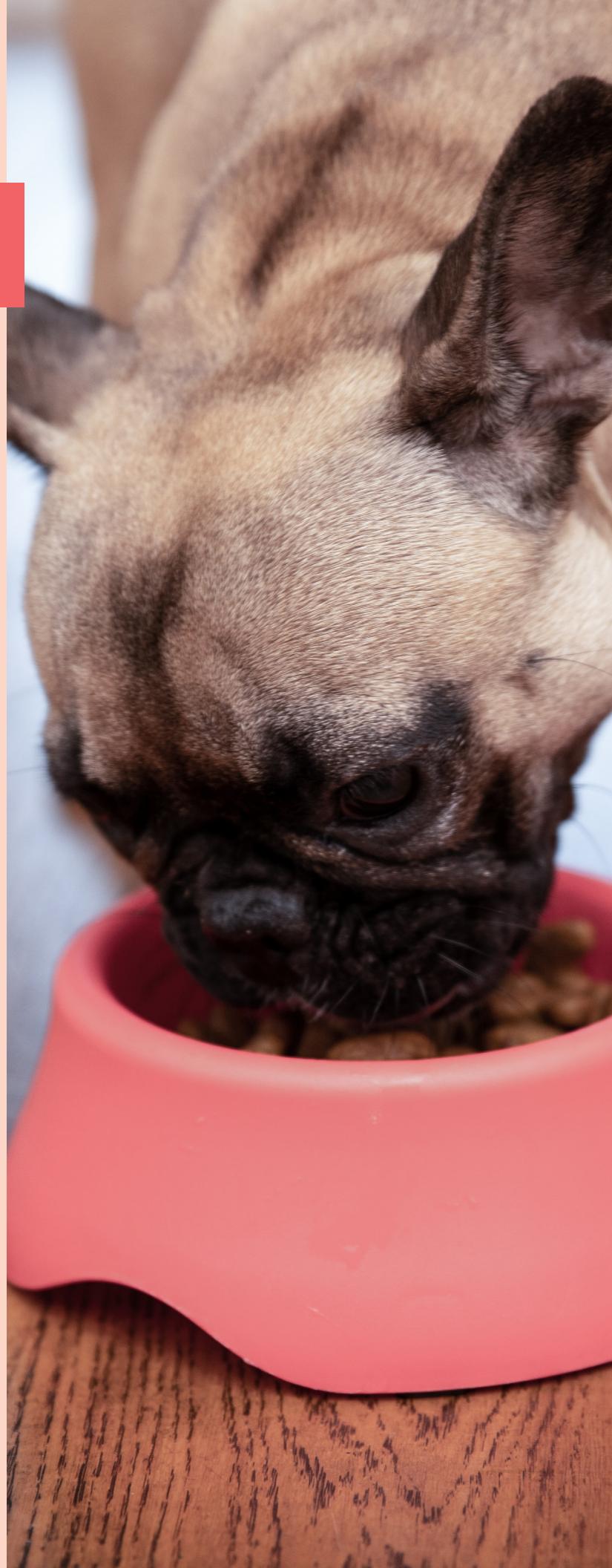
You probably consider a dog a picky eater **if they're not eating their meals** no matter how nutritious or how many new dog food brands they try.

Another behaviour to measure is **how long your dog takes to eat a normal meal**. Dogs that don't empty their food bowls within a certain amount of time, usually about 20 minutes, are more likely to be considered picky eaters.

Also, your dog can be categorized as a picky eater if he happily **eats dog treats or scraps of the table but won't touch his food**. This could be a sign that your dog believes that he can wait to get better options; therefore, he doesn't want to touch his "boring" dry food.

So when should you be concerned?

The most critical thing to watch out for is if their behaviour towards food changes. If your dog loved all his meals and ate it with no issue before but then **suddenly becomes pickier**, this may be a sign of an underlying health issue. It is time for a vet visit, especially if other symptoms are present as well, such as recent weight loss, vomiting, or diarrhea.



What could be the cause of my dog's picky eating?

Health Issue

As mentioned, picky eating can be a sign of an underlying health issue. Always check in with your vet if a sudden behavioral change has occurred in your dog. Dr. Jennifer Kvamme's advice: "If your dog has always been a good eater and suddenly develops a diminished appetite, this is something to be concerned about immediately. If he has lost weight recently or develops vomiting or diarrhea as well, it is time to make a visit to the veterinarian."



Behavioural/Psychological

If your pet has had a bad experience with a certain type, texture, or flavour of food, they may avoid it because it brings up bad memories. Think about the last time you had food poisoning or an upset tummy after eating something bad, you probably stayed away from that food for a while! Your dog might do the same if they link a problem with certain foods. Trying a different type of food might be the trick here.

Anxiety is another common cause of behavioural changes such as food refusal. Being nervous can deplete your appetite, the same goes for your dog! Just like people, dogs don't eat as much if they're anxious. Anxiety can be caused by loneliness, boredom, storms, fireworks, or separation anxiety (being home alone during the workday, for example).



Personality & Preferences

DVM Dr. Becky Lundgren says that sometimes, the picky eater's problem is that he doesn't like the type of food you're giving him, or that he prefers a different texture. Sometimes boredom sets in when your pup has been eating the same meal for a long time. Rotating recipes, adding toppers, and giving fresh food are some ways of enhancing the flavour profile and stimulating your dog's appetite for food again.

Age

As they age, dogs may become less active and eat less to maintain their weight. This isn't concerning if they're still in good shape and are reasonably alert/perky. If your senior dog is otherwise healthy, continue to feed him the same nutritious, healthy & balanced diet to support his immune system and holistic well-being.

Breed

Some eating habits are actually linked to genetics, as specific breeds are known for being fussy about their food. There are quite a few smaller dog breeds that are known to be picky eaters, including breeds like the Maltese, Bichon Frise, and Pekingese. Although many smaller breeds come to mind first, there are also a few larger breeds who are known to be finicky eaters (Huskies anyone?).

Tips to encourage my dog to eat



Reduce the treats

Feeding your dog treats in any form can deter them from wanting their regular meal. This includes feeding them table scraps, training treats, or dog chew (ex. Bully sticks or pig ears). Not only can this cause obesity, but it also encourages picky eating behaviour. Your dog is going to try and wait for something that is more appetizing than what he's getting normally. Make sure to limit treats until your dog is eating his regular food with more enthusiasm.

Create a calm setting

Avoid distractions and loud noises & feed at consistent times each day. Another thing to keep in mind is to make the rest of the day calming too. Regular walks, attention, and care throughout the day can go a long way towards making sure your pet is feeling good when mealtime rolls around. Lastly, keep your cool! If you're worried that your pet isn't eating this anxiety can spill over to your pet, who may not understand why you get upset at mealtimes. Pets then sometimes associate eating or mealtime with something wrong or upsetting



Stick to a plan

Dogs love routine. This is true of meal time as well so try making meal time the same time every day. Furthermore, sticking to a plan about what they're eating is important as well. Sometimes too much variety can actually make a dog pickier.

Set a deadline

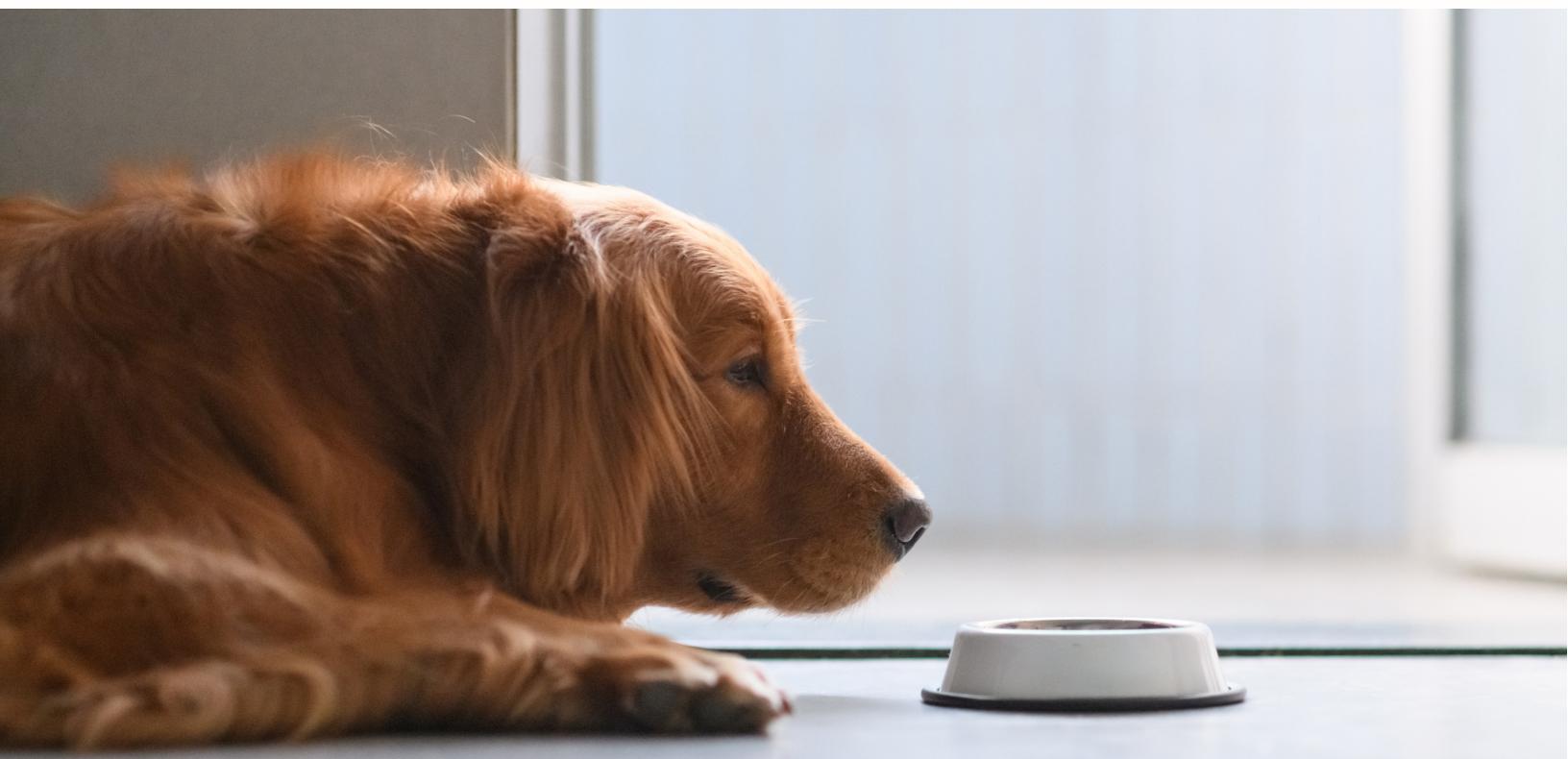
If your dog isn't eating, you should try giving him his food for only 20 - 30 minutes. Take the food away whether he has only eaten a bit or hasn't touched it at all. Do not feed him until his next scheduled meal. By doing this, you're sending a message that he needs to eat the food given to him otherwise there is no food!



Introduce fresh food into their diet

Since fresh food is made from whole ingredients, it has enhanced flavour and aroma. This will stimulate your picky dog's appetite and encourage him or her to eat.

Fresh dog food is available through finding recipes online to cook at home, or you can buy from brands who professionally formulate fresh pet meals!





Healthy food options for picky eaters

Try feeding your pet a **higher quality food**. Your pet is more discerning and intuitive than you would believe. If the food you are giving him has questionable ingredients, preservatives, or is overly processed, he may just be refusing to eat something that is not good for her. Sample a higher quality food with clean ingredients and see if there is a difference in her preferences.

Cooking simple foods at home can often increase a dog's appetite. Ingredients such as chicken or rice are commonly used and are okay as a short-term solution. If you decide homemade meals are the way you want to feed your dog in the long-term, you will need to add more ingredients to their diet. Research has shown that many of the dog food recipes that are found online or in books aren't actually nutritionally balanced. Therefore, you should definitely consult your vet when building your dog's food plan!

Another food item to consider when trying to encourage a finicky eater is **kibble toppers**. Adding some variety to your pet's food can make a world of difference. This option is quite a bit easier than cooking entire meals for your pet. You can add up to 10% of your pet's daily calorie requirement as a topper and still prevent nutritional imbalances in their diet.

So how do you get all the benefits of fresh, homemade dog food, without the hassle?

To ensure you aren't guessing at your dog's nutrition and to save you valuable time, professionally formulated fresh pet food is something you should consider. **Kafka's Organic pet food is formulated to be complete & nutritionally balanced meals** but can also be used as a topper for both kibble and raw food diets. You can get a subscription and have fresh pet food delivered right to your front door in Vancouver and surrounding areas.

Bottom Line

Hopefully these tips help your pet get excited again for mealtimes. Food alternatives that are more fresh can really help! These foods are more nutrient-dense and closer in both taste and texture to human foods that most dogs gobble down with enthusiasm. We suggest trying a fresh food alternative – you'll be in for a nice surprise!



About Kafka's Organic

We are a local Vancouver-based business offering natural, fresh pet meals with convenient home delivery. Kafka's meals are free of any preservatives or additives, and contain only locally sourced fresh ingredients and high-quality supplements. Our team spent countless hours researching and consulting with veterinary nutrition experts to come up with Kafka's complete & balanced fresh pet food.

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