



## Feeding and Hydration Guidelines for Small Animals, Reptiles, and Horses

Providing the right amount of food and water is crucial for the health and well-being of animals. The nutritional requirements vary widely depending on species, age, weight, breed, activity level, and life stage. This handout outlines general feeding and hydration guidelines for small animals, reptiles, and horses.

### Dogs

Feeding dogs the right amount of food depends on various factors, including their breed, size, age, activity level, and life stage. Below are general guidelines:

#### 1. Puppies

- **Age:** Birth to 1 year (varies by breed)
- **Feeding Frequency:** 3-4 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - **Toy Breeds:** 1/4 to 1 cup per day
  - **Small Breeds:** 1 to 2 cups per day
  - **Medium Breeds:** 2 to 3 cups per day
  - **Large Breeds:** 3 to 4 cups per day
  - **Giant Breeds:** 4 to 6 cups per day



#### 2. Adult Dogs

- **Age:** 1 to 7 years (varies by breed)
- **Feeding Frequency:** 2 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - **Toy Breeds:** 1/4 to 1/2 cup per day
  - **Small Breeds:** 1/2 to 1 cup per day
  - **Medium Breeds:** 1 to 2 cups per day
  - **Large Breeds:** 2 to 3 cups per day
  - **Giant Breeds:** 3 to 5 cups per day

#### 3. Senior Dogs

- **Age:** Over 7 years (varies by breed)
- **Feeding Frequency:** 2 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - Adjust based on activity level and health condition; typically less than adult needs by 10-20%.

#### 4. Activity Level

- **Inactive/Sedentary:** Decrease portion by 10-20%
- **Active/Working:** Increase portion by 20-50%

#### 5. Water Requirements

- **General:** 1 ounce of water per pound of body weight per day
- **Active/Hot Weather:** Increase water intake as needed





## Cats

Cats have different feeding requirements based on their life stage, weight, and activity level.

### 1. Kittens

- **Age:** Birth to 1 year
- **Feeding Frequency:** 3-4 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - **3-6 months:** 1/3 to 1 cup per day
  - **6-12 months:** 1/2 to 1 cup per day



### 2. Adult Cats

- **Age:** 1 to 7 years
- **Feeding Frequency:** 2 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - **Average Cat (8-10 lbs):** 1/2 to 3/4 cup per day
  - Adjust based on body condition and activity level.

### 3. Senior Cats

- **Age:** Over 7 years
- **Feeding Frequency:** 2 times a day
- **Amount:**
  - Adjust based on health status and activity; may require senior-specific diet with adjusted portions.

### 4. Water Requirements

- **General:** 3.5 to 4.5 ounces of water per 5 pounds of body weight daily
- **Considerations:** Increase for dry food diets or hot weather conditions
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## Rabbits

Rabbits require a diet rich in fibre and should have access to hay at all times. Pellets and fresh vegetables are also part of their diet.

### 1. Young Rabbits (Under 1 year)

- **Pellets:** Unlimited access until 7 months, then reduce to 1/4 cup per 5 lbs of body weight
- **Hay:** Unlimited access (alfalfa for young rabbits, transitioning to timothy or grass hay as they mature)
- **Vegetables:** Introduce gradually, about 1 cup per 2 lbs of body weight

### 2. Adult Rabbits

- **Pellets:** 1/4 to 1/2 cup per 6 lbs of body weight daily
- **Hay:** Unlimited access (timothy or grass hay)
- **Vegetables:** 2 cups per 6 lbs of body weight daily

### 3. Water Requirements

- **General:** Fresh water available at all times; approximately 50-150 ml/kg of body weight daily



## Guinea Pigs

Guinea pigs need a diet rich in vitamin C, as they cannot synthesise it.



### 1. Young Guinea Pigs (Under 6 months)

- **Pellets:** 1/8 cup daily, fortified with vitamin C
- **Hay:** Unlimited access (alfalfa hay)
- **Vegetables:** 1/2 to 1 cup of fresh vegetables rich in vitamin C daily

### 2. Adult Guinea Pigs

- **Pellets:** 1/8 cup daily, fortified with vitamin C
- **Hay:** Unlimited access (timothy or grass hay)
- **Vegetables:** 1 cup of fresh vegetables rich in vitamin C daily

### 3. Water Requirements

- **General:** 100-200 ml/kg of body weight daily; provide fresh water at all times

## Reptiles

### Snakes

Snakes' feeding requirements vary greatly by species, size, and age. They are carnivorous and typically fed prey items.

#### 1. Juvenile Snakes

- **Feeding Frequency:** Every 5-7 days
- **Prey Size:** Appropriate size prey that is no larger than the widest part of the snake's body

#### 2. Adult Snakes

- **Feeding Frequency:** Every 10-14 days
- **Prey Size:** One appropriately sized prey item

#### 3. Water Requirements

- **General:** Fresh water should be available at all times; misting for humidity as needed based on species



## Lizards

Lizards' dietary needs depend on whether they are herbivores, insectivores, or omnivores.

#### 1. Herbivorous Lizards (e.g., Iguanas)

- **Feeding Frequency:** Daily
- **Diet Composition:** 80-90% leafy greens and vegetables, 10-20% fruits



## 2. Insectivorous Lizards (e.g., Geckos)

- **Feeding Frequency:** Every 1-2 days
- **Diet Composition:** Insects (crickets, mealworms), dusted with calcium and vitamin supplements

## 3. Omnivorous Lizards (e.g., Bearded Dragons)

- **Juveniles:** 50% insects, 50% vegetables/fruits
- **Adults:** 25% insects, 75% vegetables/fruits

## 4. Water Requirements

- **General:** Fresh water should be available at all times; additional misting or soaking may be necessary for hydration and humidity

## Turtles and Tortoises

Turtles and tortoises have varied diets based on their species.

### 1. Aquatic Turtles

- **Diet Composition:** Pellets, fish, insects, and leafy greens
- **Feeding Frequency:** Every 1-2 days



### 2. Tortoises

- **Diet Composition:** Primarily leafy greens and vegetables, limited fruits
- **Feeding Frequency:** Daily

### 3. Water Requirements

- **General:** Fresh water for drinking and soaking should be available at all times

## Horses

Horses are herbivorous animals that require a diet primarily composed of forage (hay and pasture). Their feeding requirements vary based on age, weight, breed, activity level, and life stage. It's essential to provide a balanced diet to maintain their health, growth, and performance.



## Foals and Young Horses

### 1. Foals (0-6 months)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Primary Nutrition:** Mare's milk
  - **Creep Feeding:** Start introducing creep feed (a specialised high-protein grain mix) at 2-3 months to supplement their diet as they grow.



- **Amount:**
  - **Milk:** As needed, depending on the mare's milk production
  - **Creep Feed:** 0.5-1 lb per 100 lbs of body weight per day, gradually increasing as they grow.
- **Water Requirements:**
  - Foals should have access to clean, fresh water at all times, with special attention to their growing hydration needs.

## 2. Weanlings (6-12 months)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Forage:** High-quality hay, grass, and access to pasture
  - **Concentrates:** Growth-specific feeds with balanced vitamins and minerals
- **Amount:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight daily
  - **Concentrates:** 1-2 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight per day, divided into multiple meals
- **Water Requirements:**
  - Clean water should be readily available; foals typically drink more water as they transition from milk to solid food.

## 3. Yearlings (12-24 months)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Forage:** High-quality hay and pasture
  - **Concentrates:** Balanced for growth, adjusting as they mature
- **Amount:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
  - **Concentrates:** 0.5-1.5 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight per day
- **Water Requirements:**
  - Yearlings need consistent access to fresh water, with requirements depending on climate and activity.

## Adult Horses

Adult horses have different dietary needs depending on their weight, breed, and activity level. Here's how you can feed them:

### 1. Maintenance Horses (Light Work/Inactive)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Forage:** High-quality hay and pasture, which should form the bulk of their diet
  - **Concentrates:** Minimal or none, depending on body condition and forage quality
- **Amount:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2.5% of body weight per day
  - **Concentrates:** If needed, up to 0.5 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight
- **Water Requirements:**
  - **Average:** 5-10 gallons per day, depending on weather and diet



## 2. Performance Horses (Moderate to Heavy Work)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Forage:** Quality hay and pasture
  - **Concentrates:** Energy-dense feeds tailored for athletic performance, including grains, commercial mixes, or fat supplements
- **Amount:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
  - **Concentrates:** 0.5-1.5 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight per day, adjusted based on work intensity
- **Water Requirements:**
  - **Average:** 10-20 gallons per day, increasing with temperature and work intensity

## 3. Breeding Horses (Broodmares and Stallions)

- **Broodmares (Gestation and Lactation):**
  - **Gestation (Early):**
    - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
    - **Concentrates:** 0.5 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight
  - **Lactation (First 3 Months):**
    - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
    - **Concentrates:** 1-1.5 lbs per 100 lbs of body weight, with high calcium and phosphorus
- **Stallions:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
  - **Concentrates:** 0.5-1 lb per 100 lbs of body weight, adjusting for breeding season demands
- **Water Requirements:**
  - **Broodmares:** 10-20 gallons per day, more if lactating
  - **Stallions:** Consistent access, typically 8-15 gallons per day

## Senior Horses

Senior horses often have different nutritional needs due to age-related changes in digestion and health.

### 1. Senior Horses (Over 20 years)

- **Feeding:**
  - **Forage:** Easy-to-chew forage like soaked hay cubes or chopped hay
  - **Concentrates:** Senior-specific feeds that are easily digestible, high in fibre, and include joint support nutrients
- **Amount:**
  - **Forage:** 1.5-2% of body weight per day
  - **Concentrates:** Adjust based on body condition and health needs



- **Water Requirements:**
  - Senior horses may require warmer water to encourage drinking, averaging 5-15 gallons per day, depending on weather and health.

### Factors Influencing Feeding Amounts

#### 1. Age

- Young animals generally require more frequent feedings with nutrient-dense food to support growth.
- Adults need maintenance diets with adequate calories to sustain their activity level.
- Seniors often benefit from modified diets that consider metabolic slowdown and dental health.

#### 2. Weight/Size

- Larger animals require more food, but diets should be balanced to prevent obesity or malnutrition.
- Adjust feeding based on body condition scoring (BCS), aiming for an ideal score of 4-6 out of 9 for horses and 5 out of 9 for dogs and cats.

#### 3. Breed

- Breed-specific metabolic rates influence how much and what type of food an animal should consume. For example, toy dog breeds often require more calories per pound compared to larger breeds, while draft horses need diets that support their size and muscle mass.

#### 4. Activity Level

- Active animals, such as working dogs, performance horses, or reptiles with higher metabolism, require more energy-dense diets.
- Sedentary or less active animals should have their caloric intake reduced to prevent obesity.

#### 5. Life Stage

- Adjust feeding programs according to life stages, such as growth, maintenance, reproduction, or senior status, to meet specific nutritional requirements.

#### 6. Health Status

- Health conditions, such as kidney disease in cats or metabolic disorders in horses, may necessitate specialised diets tailored to manage these issues.

### Nutritional Tips for Small Animals, Reptiles, and Horses

- **Consistency:** Maintain a consistent feeding schedule to help regulate digestion and prevent digestive issues.
- **Monitor:** Regularly assess body condition and weight to adjust feeding amounts as needed.
- **Freshness:** Provide fresh food and water, checking for spoilage or contamination, especially in hot weather.
- **Supplements:** Use supplements carefully and only under the guidance of a veterinarian or nutritionist.



- **Pasture Management:** Rotate grazing areas for horses to prevent overgrazing and maintain pasture health.
- **Environmental Enrichment:** Offer a variety of foods and feeding methods to promote mental and physical stimulation.

## Feeding Summary

The dietary needs of small animals, reptiles, and horses vary widely based on several key factors. Understanding these influences is crucial to maintaining their health and well-being. Below is a summary of the main feeding considerations and requirements.

## Key Feeding Considerations

### Age

- **Young Animals:** Require higher protein and calorie intake to support growth and development.
- **Adults:** Need maintenance diets balanced for their activity level, weight, and lifestyle.
- **Seniors:** Often benefit from diets tailored to manage age-related changes, focusing on easy digestibility and nutrient density.

### Weight and Size

- Larger animals require more food overall, but feeding should be adjusted to avoid obesity or underfeeding.
- Monitor body condition regularly, using body condition scoring to maintain optimal health.

### Breed

- Specific breeds have unique metabolic rates and nutritional needs.
  - **Toy Breeds (Dogs/Cats):** Higher calorie intake per pound.
  - **Draft Breeds (Horses):** Require diets that support their larger muscle mass and activity.

### Activity Level

- **Active Animals:** Require more energy-dense diets with additional calories and nutrients to sustain physical demands.
- **Inactive/Sedentary Animals:** Need reduced caloric intake to prevent weight gain and maintain health.

### Life Stage

- Tailor diets to different life stages: growth, maintenance, reproduction, and seniority, each with specific nutritional profiles.
- **Pregnant/Nursing Females:** Increased nutrient requirements to support offspring development.

### Health Status

- Health conditions such as kidney disease, diabetes, or metabolic syndromes necessitate special dietary management.
- Consultation with veterinarians for dietary adjustments tailored to health issues is crucial.



**Sample Feeding Charts**

Here are sample feeding charts for different types of animals for quick reference:

**Dogs**

Weight (lbs)	Maintenance (cups/day)	Active (cups/day)	Puppies (cups/day)
5-10	1/2 - 1	3/4 - 1 1/4	1 - 1 1/4
10-20	1 - 1 1/2	1 1/4 - 2	1 1/2 - 2
20-50	1 1/2 - 2 1/2	2 - 3 1/2	2 1/2 - 4
50-100	2 1/2 - 4 1/2	3 1/2 - 6	4 - 8



**Cats**

Weight (lbs)	Dry Food (cups/day)	Wet Food (oz/day)
5-10	1/4 - 1/2	3 - 6
10-15	1/2 - 3/4	6 - 9
15-20	3/4 - 1	9 - 12



**Horses**

Weight (lbs)	Forage (% of BW)	Concentrates (lbs/day)	Water (gallons/day)
500-1,000	1.5 - 2.5	0 - 10	5 - 10
1,000-1,500	1.5 - 2.5	5 - 15	10 - 20
1,500-2,000	1.5 - 2.5	10 - 20	15 - 25

