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# Natural Treats for Dogs & Snack Alternatives

It's no secret that dogs love to eat, and many owners are happy to share some of their snacks and food with their companions. However, you should be cautious of what you feed them, as some foods can lead to excessive weight gain or even be toxic to dogs. Today, our Carlsbad vets share some healthy snack alternatives and natural treats for dogs.



## Choosing Healthy Treats & Snacks for Dogs

We all know that dogs love treats, but those little treats can add up and negatively impact their weight and overall health if not given in moderation. This is why limiting your dog's snacking and only providing health choices is critical.

### What's the big deal with regular dog treats?

Standard dog treats are just that — treats. They can have a large number of calories and can even rival the calories in a scoop of their kibble. This can quickly make weight management a difficult task.

Along with being high in calories, these treats also often contain fillers and preservatives, depending on the brand. While most treats will offer some level of nutritional benefits, you may want to limit them and consider some healthier alternatives.

### What are the best treats for overweight dogs?

If you're looking to watch your dog's weight, or just generally looking out for their health, here are some healthier snack options that your dog will still find yummy:

#### Apples

After removing the core and seeds, a couple of apple slices are a great treat for your dog. Apples are full of nutrients like vitamin C and fiber, and most dogs enjoy this as a crunchy and refreshing treat.

#### Green Peas

Most dogs love peas, and the vitamins and zinc in them are great for them. Fresh or frozen, they make a great treat to use while training or as a snack in their bowl.

#### Carrots

Carrots are loaded with beta-carotene and other vitamins and make a good, healthy snack for dogs. Be sure they are cut into small enough pieces for your dog, especially if they get excited and tend to swallow their snacks whole.

#### Green Beans

Green beans are a great fiber-filled treat alternative. They contain vitamins A and K, and can be eaten raw, cooked, steamed, or even canned, as long as there is no seasoning.

#### Watermelon

Watermelon makes a tasty, healthy, and hydrating treat option for dogs, especially on a hot day. This juicy fruit not only has a high water content, but it is also packed with vitamins A and C. Just take the time to remove the rind and seeds before offering it to your pup.

#### Cooked Sweet Potatoes

While sweet potatoes aren't the quickest to cook, they keep well in the fridge, making them a great treat throughout the week. Always ensure that sweet potatoes are unseasoned and cooked. Never give your pup raw potatoes of any kind.

#### Bananas

While bananas are a little higher in sugar, they also are full of nutrients like potassium and vitamin C, making them a great treat for your dog. Many dogs love the taste, and a small piece or two is sure to get them excited!

#### Broccoli

Cruciferous veggies like broccoli can make great healthy snacks for dogs. They are full of fiber, vitamins C and K, iron, and potassium. Like many other vegetables, your dog can have them raw, steamed, or cooked as long as they have no seasoning. Just be sure to cut the broccoli into small pieces to prevent choking.

#### Cooked Squash

All different types of squashes, like butternut squash, pumpkin, or zucchini, make excellent healthy treats for dogs. These veggies contain nutrients like vitamins B6 and C, magnesium, fiber, and potassium. Always remove the seeds and cut them into small pieces, and in the case of butternut squash, you'll need to remove the rind as well.

Pumpkins can also be a remedy for mild diarrhea in dogs. Diarrhea is an uncomfortable and potentially serious internal condition that can cause dehydration. Pumpkin can help remove the excess water in the digestive tract, relieving the symptoms.

#### Strawberries

Like bananas, strawberries can contain a larger amount of sugar, but these tiny treats are full of vitamin C! Your dog is bound to be wagging their tail when given the option of chomping on a few of these.

#### Blueberries

Blueberries are another great little fruit that is packed full of vitamins C and K, manganese, and potassium. These make a great treat that your dog is likely to love but should be given in moderation as they contain sugars just like other fruits.

## Things to Keep in Mind

Your dog's body will likely react to having new foods for the first time. When introducing new foods or treats into their diet, it's always a good idea to start with a little taste before working your way up to an appropriately sized treat from there. You should never put any type of seasoning on the foods your dog will be eating, and pay special attention to whether the food you're giving them has to be cleared of seeds or rinds.

All treats should be given in moderation, especially when weight is a concern. By only giving treats in moderation, you can avoid unnecessary weight gain and help keep your pup fit and healthy.

Some foods like onions, avocados, and chocolate are poisonous to dogs, so you should double-check before giving them any human foods. If you think that your dog may have eaten toxic food, please contact an emergency animal hospital in Carlsbad for further instructions and care.

*Note: The advice provided in this post is intended for informational purposes and does not constitute medical advice regarding pets. For an accurate diagnosis of your pet's condition, please make an appointment with your vet.*

Looking for other treat alternatives or help managing your dog's weight? Contact our Carlsbad vets for help or advice.

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