

All Life Stages Diets



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All commercial diets display a nutritional guarantee on the label, which is generally designed and stated in accordance of the suggestions of AAFCO, a group of state feed control officials. This guarantee is intended to provide the pet owner assurance that the food they purchased is complete and balanced food that meets all of their pet’s needs and which is unlikely to cause nutritional deficiencies or excesses if used according to the label. This guarantee is based on either formulating the diet to meet certain nutritional parameters or on a defined feeding trial to ensure adequacy for the “life stage” for which it is intended, such as for adult maintenance or for growth, gestation, and lactation. There is a trend in the pet food market to label and design foods for “all life stages.” In essence, this does not require significant modification of foods because diets that meet growth or reproduction requirements will also meet adult maintenance requirements given that the former are only slightly higher than what is expected of an adult maintenance diet for certain nutrients.

Exactly what are the differences between adult maintenance and growth? Surprisingly to most people, the requirements for growth only differ in a few categories such as protein, fat, calcium, sodium as well as small differences in some of the trace minerals. The table below examines the differences between growth/reproduction and adult maintenance for dogs and for cats on a 1000 kcal basis.

NUTRIENT	Puppy/ Reproduction	Dogs	Kitten/ Reproduction	Cats
Protein	56.3	45.0	75	65
Taurine (g)	-	-	0.25	0.25
Fat (g)	21.3	13.8	22.5	22.5
Linoleic acid (g)	3.3	2.8	1.4	1.4
Arachidonic (g)	-	-	1.4	1.4
Calcium (g)	3.0	1.25	2.5	1.5
Phosphorus (g)	2.5	1.1	2	1.25
Magnesium (mg)	0.15	0.15	0.2	0.1
Sodium (g)	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.5
Potassium (g)	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Chloride (g)	1.1	0.3	0.75	0.75
Iron (mg)	22	10	20	20

Copper (mg)	3.1	1.83	3.75	1.25
Zinc (mg)	25	20	18.8	18.8
Manganese (mg)	1.8	1.25	1.9	1.9
Selenium (ug)	90	90	75	75
Iodine (ug)	250	250	450	450
Vitamin A (IU)	1250	1250	1667	833
Vitamin D (IU)	125	125	70	70
Vitamin E (mg)	12.5	12.5	10	10
Thiamin – B1 (mg)	0.56	0.56	1.4	1.4
Riboflavin – B2 (mg)	1.3	1.3	1	1
Pyridoxine -B6 (mg)	0.38	0.38	1	1
Niacin – B3 (mg)	3.4	3.4	15	15
Pantothenic – B5 (mg)	3.0	3.0	1.44	1.44
Cobalamin (ug)	7	7	5	5
Folic Acid (ug)	54	54	200	200

High-quality, well-formulated diets with elevated protein and adequate fat will often meet the requirements for all life stages labeling. At Veterinarian Recommended Solutions, we take extra measures for our all life stages diets to ensure that foods have the appropriate calcium and phosphorus balance for the growth of all puppies including large and giant breeds that generally require calcium at no higher than 3.75 grams/1000 kcals to ensure appropriate skeletal development. Foods are also formulated with a calcium to phosphorus balance between 1:1 and 1.5:1. Consequently, veterinarians and owners should feel comfortable using the all life stage VRS maintenance formulas to fulfill the needs for puppy growth, no matter how big or small. In the case of gestation and lactation, the higher caloric content of the cod and potato diet will help meet the demands of gestation and lactation in pregnant dogs. At VRS, we strive to help veterinarians provide clients with superior diets that both veterinarians and clients can be assured are safe wholesome diets for their companions during all stages of life.