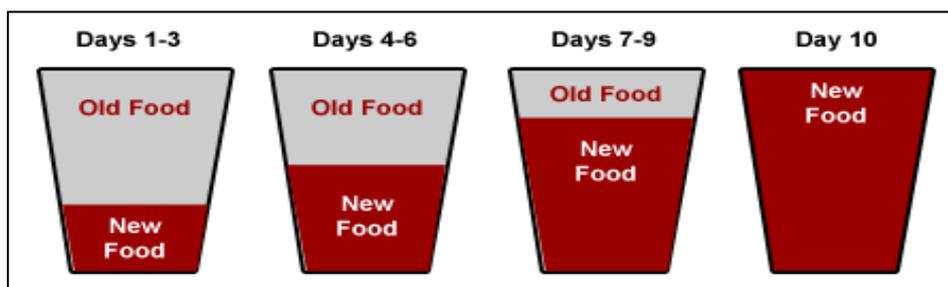


## Introducing a food for the first time

A new pet food should always be introduced gradually, even if your pet appears to like the new food. This will help reduce the chance of a stomach upset following a food change. Changes to diet affect different animals in different ways, so it is important to manage the change carefully. Some animals will be changing foods to help manage a medical condition. For these animals it is important to follow any advice given by your veterinary surgeon. Appetite can be affected by disease, so speak to your vet to see whether there is any special feeding advice for your pet. Dogs and cats are often creatures of habit and they may require some help changing foods. They may be used to having just a single type of food or on the other hand, they may be use to a varied diet. We may need to change them to a much more controlled diet due to allergies, kidney disease or needing to lose weight.

You may like to try some of the following suggestions to ease the transition between foods:

- Gradually introduce the food over 7-10 days (see diagram below)
- If you are using canned food, warm the new food to body temperature, but no hotter. Most animals will prefer canned food slightly warm as it can improve the smell and feel in the mouth.
- Avoid feeding chilled foods.
- Don't be tempted to add human food tidbits to the new diet. Most animals will end up eating the human food instead, and this can develop into a bad habit long term.
- For very fussy or finicky eaters, try hand feeding the new food as a treat. This will reinforce the positive bond between the owner, pet and new food.
- Keep a bowl of fresh water available at all times.
- If you are really struggling to change your pet's food, speak to one of our friendly nurses for help.



### Transitioning to a new food:

Gradually mix increasing amounts of the new food with decreasing amounts of the old food over a 7-10 day period.