

# American College of Veterinary Nutrition



## **NUTRITION COMPETENCIES OF SMALL-ANIMAL VETERINARIANS**

*Small-Animal Veterinarians should be able to perform the following functions competently upon graduation.*

### **ANIMAL RELATED FACTORS:**

#### ***All patients***

1. Determine the signalment (physiologic status) of the animal.
2. Estimate the maintenance energy requirements (MER) for that patient and determine if being met or exceeded.
3. Determine if the animal has an age, sex or breed-related susceptibility to a nutritional problem.
4. Determine if any recent changes have occurred in the animal's food intake, activity and/or environment.
5. Determine if the animal has a history of known or suspected food aversions or sensitivities.
6. Determine if the animal has historical disease/s that has been treated, or is currently being treated, with modification of the feed or feeding management.
7. Conduct a systems review to identify nutrition-related organ system problems.

#### ***Physical & Laboratory Examination***

8. Assign a body condition score.
9. Assign a muscle mass score
10. Make an accurate assessment of the animal's weight.
11. Request and evaluate appropriate laboratory and diagnostic testing helpful in diagnosing nutrition-related problems and diet-sensitive diseases.

#### ***Given the results of the history, physical and laboratory evaluation:***

12. Recognize physical signs of malnutrition.
13. Compare the animal's physiological condition with the diet history.
14. Determine adequacy of the current diet for the physiological status of the animal.
15. Estimate the risk of a nutrition-related problem as high, moderate, or low.

#### ***For sick patients:***

16. Recognize when modification of the feed or feeding management is required.
17. Monitor progress of therapy, adjusting as necessary.
18. Recognize when nutrition-related reference materials and qualified nutrition experts should be consulted.

## **FOOD/FEED RELATED FACTORS:**

### ***All patients***

1. Obtain an accurate and complete diet history, including treats and supplements
2. Determine if any recent changes have occurred in the animal's diet, food intake.
3. Understand the functions of nutrients and the role of ingredients and nutrients in health and disease.
4. Understand the nutritional concepts of minimal vs optimal vs safe upper limits vs toxic levels

### ***Given the results of the history, physical and laboratory evaluation:***

5. Compare the animal's physiological condition with the diet history.
6. Determine adequacy of the complete dietary intake for the physiological status and MER of the animal.
7. Estimate the risk of a nutrition-related problem as high, moderate, or low.

### ***For sick patients:***

8. Differentiate between the presence of diet-induced and nutrient-sensitive disease.
9. Prescribe a diet that incorporates changes appropriate for the diagnosed problem.
10. Provide assistance to formulate an adequate home-prepared diet when necessary, referring to ACVN Diplomate as needed.
11. Monitor progress of therapy, adjusting as necessary.
12. Recognize when nutrition-related reference materials and qualified nutrition experts should be consulted.

### ***For healthy animals:***

13. Assist the client in choosing appropriate diets for their pet's lifestage, activity and physiology, consistent with the client's personal preferences.
14. Provide assistance to formulate an adequate home-prepared diet when necessary, referring to qualified nutrient experts as needed.
15. Prescribe a feeding protocol to maintain the animal's appropriate body condition within the client's lifestyle.
16. Describe methods for changing the diet of animals with selective appetites.

## **FEEDING MANAGEMENT FACTORS:**

### ***All patients***

1. Obtain an accurate and complete diet history, including treats and supplements.
2. Determine if any recent changes have occurred in the animal's diet, food intake, activity and/or environment.
3. Determine adequacy of the feeding management for the physiological status of the animal.
4. Estimate the risk of a nutrition-related problem as high, moderate, or low.
5. Effectively communicate the results to the client

***For sick patients:***

6. Establish the most appropriate route for nutrition support.
7. Prescribe a diet that incorporates nutrient changes appropriate for the diagnosed problem.
8. Persuade the client to adhere to nutritional recommendations.
9. Monitor progress of therapy, adjusting as necessary.
10. Recognize when nutrition-related reference materials and qualified nutrition experts should be consulted.

***For healthy animals:***

11. Assist the client in choosing appropriate diets for their pet's lifestage, activity and physiology, consistent with the client's personal preferences.
12. Prescribe a feeding protocol to maintain the animal's appropriate body condition within the client's lifestyle.
13. Describe methods for changing the diet of animals with selective appetites.

**CLIENT AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FACTORS**

***Client education:***

1. Address client questions regarding nutrition, diets and ingredients
2. Demonstrate how to perform body condition scoring and explain appropriate body condition of animal for client.

***Professional education:***

3. Evaluate nutrition-related information presented in journals and other professional texts.
4. Evaluate validity of nutrition-related marketing claims.
5. Evaluate validity of nutrition-related statements from various sources.
6. Recognize when nutrition-related reference materials and qualified nutrition experts should be consulted.