



Food Puzzles and Treat-Toys

The following is a list of food puzzles, treat dispensing toys and long-lasting treat products Freeport Veterinary Hospital recommends. While not a substitute for exercise and training, these products can be extremely beneficial if used correctly. Dogs need mental stimulation, and any of these products can be used in addition to training. They can help decrease boredom related behaviors such as destructive chewing or barking, prevent separation and establish appropriate chewing habits. Meals fed in puzzles last longer and your dog gets a mental work-out while he eats!

“Stuffable” Food Toys

“Stuffable” food toys are hollow and can be filled as needed and given or stored in the freezer for easy access. There are many options for filling these toys such as: kibble (dry, soaked in water to make “mush” or mixed with water/chicken



broth to add flavor), canned food, dog treats, peanut butter, cheese, meat flavored baby foods, yogurt (small amounts), cooked lean meats such as chicken breast, ground hamburger/turkey, and cooked veggies such as carrots, peas, green beans or sweet potatoes. Remember, puppies can have sensitive systems so introduce new food items in small amounts at first. Many puppies are readily willing to eat just their kibble and/or canned food! For fussier pups mixing some other ingredients in a bowl with kibble to coat it before filling the bone, then “sealing” the end with a dab of peanut butter or cheese will give them

a tasty treat without overloading their system. Lean cooked meats, meat baby foods and chicken broth are great options that are easy on the digestive system.



Kongs™ and Sterile Bones: Kongs are a classic! Easy to fill and freeze, fun for snacking and safe for teeth! A selection of different strength products are available for all chewers. Sterile bones are a cheaper and can be safe as long as chewers are supervised to make sure they are not unable to break of pieces of the bone.



Bones and Kongs™ can be filled and stored in the freezer for easy access

Food Puzzles

Food Puzzles are commercially available products designed to be filled with kibble or treats and given to the dog to try and figure out how to get the food out. These products come in a variety of designs and difficulties, from very simple to extremely complex.

Push Arouds: These products can be filled with kibble or treats, and a small opening allows the food to come out, but only when the dogs pushes the toy around. Our favorites, pictured below are the Kong Wobbler and Buster Cube, other similar products include Busy Buddy Twist & Treat, Atomic Treat Ball and the Kibble Nibble.



Slow-Feed Bowls: An alternative to the traditional bowl, these products have obstacles that the dog has to eat around, making meal time last longer and adding mental stimulation.



Food Puzzles: These products have places for treats and kibble to hide, and the dog has to figure out how to get to them out! Many of these hiding spots could also be filled with peanut butter or chicken broth and frozen, for a longer lasting puzzle. The skill levels range from very easy to extremely hard. There are a huge variety of these puzzles available, our favorites are the Nina Ottosson™ Brand puzzles.

