

## Elevated Feeders are Recommended for Dogs and Cats with Certain Conditions

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**Q.** What are the benefits of an elevated feeder?

**A.** Veterinarians recommend elevated feeders for some dogs and cats because they offer a number of advantages: hygiene and cleanliness, comfort for dogs and cats with arthritis or neck or back problems, and benefits for cats and dogs with megaesophagus or other conditions that make swallowing difficult.

Elevated feeders and dishes keep feeding areas cleaner.

Elevated dishes help keep the food and water in the bowls and not on the floor. They prevent cats from playing in their water, which some are prone to do. Dogs tend to lift their heads after taking a drink to facilitate swallowing. As the dogs raise their heads, water that does not make it down their throat often ends up on the floor. Over time, this can ruin your floor. With an elevated feeder, they do not have to raise their heads as far and the water usually drips right back into their water dish. Moisture that may get under the dish creates a great place for molds and bacteria to grow.



Elevated feeders can help in caring for dogs and cats with a condition called [megaesophagus](#). In this condition, the esophagus (the tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach) becomes large and flaccid. Instead of moving the food down to the stomach through muscular contractions, the enlarged and weak esophagus dilates and allows the food to accumulate there instead of the stomach. This can lead to regurgitation and vomiting. An elevated feeder will allow gravity to help get the food down to the stomach.

Elevated feeders may be more comfortable for some older pets. [Dogs with arthritis](#) and [cats with arthritis](#) may benefit from elevated feeders. Bending over to eat is not comfortable for pets with stiff muscles or sore joints, particularly for pets with neck or back problems, such as [intervertebral \(IV\) disc disease](#). Older pets often eat less, which means they may not get the nutrition they need. If eating or drinking is painful or uncomfortable, they are likely to eat or drink even less. Raising food and water to their level encourages eating and drinking.

Finally, elevated feeders have an extra bonus. We have had pet owners tell us that they appreciate not having to bend over as far to pick up or fill up water and food dishes. For the frail, physically handicapped, or persons with arthritis or back problems, elevated feeders can make a big difference.

In the past, elevated feeders had been recommended by some veterinarians for dogs who may be susceptible to [bloat \(gastric dilatation and volvulus - GDV\)](#).

Other veterinarians recommend against their use. If your dog is at risk of developing bloat, contact your veterinarian regarding the use of an elevated feeder.