

**CHAPTER 04**

# What Do Animals Eat

## How Animals Feed?

Different animals eat different types of food. Their manner of eating is also different. Accordingly, their mouth is also modified to suit their mode of eating.

Dogs eat food by using their sharp teeth and tongue. Wild animals like lion, fox, wolf, tiger and others also have sharp teeth. Animals that hunt have strong legs to run, sharp claws to catch and sharp teeth to tear flesh. Rabbits and squirrels also have teeth. They eat seeds, tubers, leaves etc. by using their teeth. We can see sharp teeth in a cat or dog's mouth. They tear flesh of animals by using these sharp teeth.



It is very interesting to watch how a duck catches its food. Ducks also have teeth, but they are not like the teeth of a cow or lion. They are not useful in grinding food. They act as filters to get food from water.

Similarly, fish too have teeth which are used for the same purpose as that of ducks.

**Some animals swallow their food:** Birds do not have teeth. They swallow their food whole. Lizards and snakes have very small teeth. These teeth are not useful for chewing. They only help in grabbing the food. So, snakes and lizards swallow their food whole. Snakes mostly eat mice and frogs. Snakes can separate out their jaws to open their mouth wide. This allows them to swallow preys which are bigger than their mouth.

**Some animals use their tongue to catch food:** Frogs and lizards have a long and sticky tongue. They shoot out the tongue to catch insects. The insect gets stuck to the sticky tongue.



It is very interesting to watch a frog get its food. A frog throws out its sticky tongue towards an insect. The insect gets stuck on the frog's tongue. Then the frog swallows it.

**Some animals tear, grind and chew their food:** Carnivores like lions and tigers tear and chew the flesh of animals. They have sharp, pointed and curved front teeth to tear the flesh. They also have strong grinding teeth at the back to chew the flesh. Crocodiles and alligators have a large mouth. They have large, sharp and pointed teeth. They snap at animals which come to drink water. Their teeth and powerful jaws help them to grab even big animals and tear their flesh.



**Some animals chew and swallow their food:** Herbivores like deer and giraffe eat grass and leaves. They have broad, flat and sharp front teeth to cut their food. Cows and buffaloes bite the grass and swallow it. Later, they bring back the food into their mouth and chew it slowly. This activity is called chewing the cud or rumination.



**Lapping of liquid food:** Animals like cats and dogs lap liquids like water and milk with their tongue.

Elephants use their trunk to tear off grass and branches and put it in their mouth. Elephants have large grinding teeth to chew and grind their food. They also drink water with the help of their trunk.

**Some animals suck their food:** Butter flies and mosquitoes have a feeding tube in place of mouth. This tube is called proboscis. It works like a straw. A butterfly uses the proboscis to suck liquids like nectar from flowers. A mosquito uses it to suck blood.

Ex: Butterfly sucking nectar, Mosquito sucking blood



**Mosquito****Leech**

When we walk on the banks of ponds, canals etc. we can see different kinds of animals. We can see leeches, snails, earthworms etc. People in rural areas are familiar with leeches. While rearing cattle near water they find leeches on the skin of animals. Leeches stick on the skin and suck the blood of cattle as well as humans. They have special structures called suckers in their mouth to do this.

Some animals search for their food only at night. Cockroaches, desert lizards, rats, owls, bats, moths, crickets etc. get their food only at nights. During daytime they hide in dark places. This type of animals are called Nocturnals.

**Food for Domestic Animals:** We keep cows, goats and camels for their milk. Goats, sheep and hens are kept for their meat. Hens and ducks also give us eggs. Horses, buffaloes and bullocks are used in farming. Animals like horses, donkeys and bullocks are used to carry loads. Unlike animals, which live freely in nature, domestic animals depend on us for their food. So they have to be given proper food to keep them healthy.

We know that many animals like the cow depend on plants for food. They are herbivores. Animals like cow, goat, buffalo,

sheep, giraffe, camel, elephant, deer etc. eat different parts of plants like green/dry grass, leaves and branches.

Animals like cow, buffalo, camel etc., chew food very quickly and swallow and store it in a part of their stomach. After sometime they take food material back from the stomach to the mouth and chew it again. This process is called rumination.

Different domestic animals need different types of food. Beasts of burden like donkey, elephant, camel which carry load for us need more energy. So, they should be given energy-giving foods. Egg-laying animals should be given protein-rich foods. They should be given clean water to drink in a clean vessel. Also, domestic animals should be kept in a clean place and should be checked regularly by a veterinarian.

Do you think humans are carnivores, herbivores or omnivores?  
What did you eat yesterday?

Humans are able to eat meat and plants. Some people eat only plants, but most humans have both plants and meat in their diet. This makes humans omnivores.