

Wild Kids



Dinner Is Served—Carnivore Style!

by Kelly Burns, International Wolf Center Intern

Does everyone in your house help out at mealtime? A whole wolf pack usually gets involved with big meals, too. Most of the time, the meal wolves eat is meat. Wolves are called carnivores, because they eat meat such as deer or moose. A predator must hunt for its food, which is called prey—so when a wolf goes out hunting, that's its way of preparing for a meal.

A lot of hard work is involved in a hunt before any eating takes place. A wolf gets more energy from

food in return for the energy it uses when it kills a moose, but it's dangerous for a wolf pack to hunt something so much bigger than itself. Sometimes the prey is just too strong or quick, and gets away from the pack.

A wolf can eat 25 percent of its weight at one meal. Most wolves weigh about 80 pounds. Of course, these numbers will depend on the age of the wolf, the pack size, or the time of year, but roughly translated, that's like a 100-pound person ordering 80 quarter-pounders and eating them in one sitting!

Scientists estimate that a wolf would eat about 1,800 pounds of food in a year. Most of this would be meat from animals that would have to be hunted. Using the chart below with animal weights, see how many animals would be eaten in one year. ■

Think about this:

Be a researcher! Use an encyclopedia or the Internet to answer the following questions:

? Do you think a wolf would eat only one kind of animal all year long? Why not?

? If three moose would provide a wolf with more than enough pounds of meat for the year, why doesn't a wolf just catch three and eat them for the rest of the year?

? Can you name some scavengers and decomposers who would share a wolf's meal?

Fun Fact:

Wolves have a hunting success rate of about 5-25 percent. That would be like going to the refrigerator 10 times and only finding food there two times!







Lynn and Donna Rogers, bearstudy.com

A wolf can eat 25 percent of its weight at one meal. Most wolves weigh about 80 pounds, and can usually take in 20 pounds of meat in one meal.

Try it on for size.
If you were a wolf, how much could you eat at one sitting?

(your weight) _____
Multiply by .25
= _____
what you could eat at one time as a wolf!

Fill in this chart

Estimated pounds of meat for one year:	Divided by:	Average weight of animal:	Equals:	Number of animals wolf would have to eat in one year:
1,800 pounds	÷ 	Snowshoe Hare—3 pounds	=	
1,800 pounds	÷ 	Beaver—40 pounds	=	
1,800 pounds	÷ 	Deer—100 pounds	=	
1,800 pounds	÷ 	Moose—800 pounds	=	

