

NUTRITION FOR PUPPIES

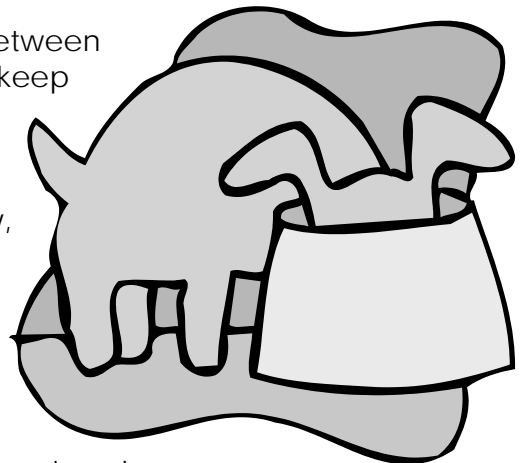
What food should I feed my puppy?

See the following pages for our recommendations for all dogs and cats. For puppies specifically:

- What you feed and how much are even more important in young, growing animals than in adults. For example, extra Omega 3 fatty acids in puppy foods enhance brain development and improve immune response. Feeding a diet with extra OM3s added makes a puppy smarter and easier to train, and they also respond better to vaccinations, developing better immunity against contagious diseases. Higher quality protein in the diet reduces the risk of injury and leads to stronger bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments.
- Large and giant breed puppies have different nutritional requirements than small ones. It is essential to feed a large breed puppy formula to a large breed puppy! If your puppy will eventually weigh more than fifty pounds, he or she is a large breed.

How much food should I feed?

- The average puppy will double its weight between eight and twelve weeks of age. It's hard to keep up with the amount of food they need when they are growing so fast. In most cases, you don't need to worry about quantity. Put the food down 3-4 times a day, let the puppy eat what it wants and take the food away when he or she walks away from the bowl.
- An exception to this is the occasional puppy who will eat so much and so fast it will vomit.
- Another exception is large or giant breed puppies whose weight gain needs to be limited. Big puppies can grow so fast their bones can't keep up with the rest of them. This can lead to serious joint development problems. We weigh these puppies carefully and often while they grow, and adjust their food amount as needed.
- Manufacturers will often provide guidelines on their packaging and/or product guides and web sites.
- These guidelines are developed based on the needs of an average pet; the true needs of the individual pet can vary by 25% or more depending on their breed, body composition, environment and activity level. Work closely with your veterinarian to determine the specific amount you should be feeding your pet.



How should I feed my pet and how often?

- Puppies under 16 weeks of age should be fed 3-5 times a day. Toy breed puppies are more likely to get hypoglycemic between meals and need more frequent meals.
- As the puppy gets older, the number of feedings can be gradually decreased.
- By the time they have reached 50% of their adult body weight they should be eating 2-3 meals a day. The timing of this varies depending on the size of the breed.
- At 5-6 months of age most puppies can be fed twice a day. Giant breeds still have a lot of growing to do at this age, so they often need the extra 3rd meal longer. Most healthy adult pets should also be fed twice a day.

Free feeding (ad-libitum, meaning leaving food out all the time) is not recommended, for several reasons:

- Meal feeding makes house training much easier. Puppies fed at the same times every day will have predictable bowel movement times. Always try to feed at approximately the same time and in the same locations every day, as this will help the pet keep normal elimination habits and avoid accidents.
- It's easier to tell if a puppy is ill. If a puppy skips a meal you will notice it is sick sooner.
- Adult dogs fed all they want to eat almost always get too fat. It's never a good idea to get into this habit. If you will meal feed your dog as an adult, you should meal feed now as well.

How should I store the food for my pet and maintain its freshness?

- Always check the packaging for the best before date. Don't buy it if it's getting old. (Stores often reduce the price on food if it's getting old. Big discount? Check the expiration date!) Nutrients, especially vitamins, deteriorate with time and fats can become rancid.
- Never feed pet food that is moldy or smells "off."
- Purchase the right size bag of food for your pet (e.g. do not buy a 40 pound bag of dog food for a Chihuahua).
- Store the food in a cool, dry place and keep the storage bin tightly closed. It's OK to freeze dry kibble, this will help it to stay fresh longer. Grain and storage mites invade open bags of pet food remarkably quickly.
- Always discard any uneaten food each day and clean the bowl before the next meal.
- Opened canned foods should be stored covered in the refrigerator for a maximum of 3 days.

What snacks and treats should I give my pet?

- The best treat for a puppy is puppy food. You can use nuggets of your puppy's regular food or purchase a small bag of a different brand to use as treats. No more than 10% of an adult dog's diet should come from treats. In a growing puppy with high nutrient requirements, even 10% is too much.
- Most dog treats are not very healthy. They are often high in salt and fat while being low in nutrients.

- Never feed your puppy or dog raw meat or bones! These can be contaminated with bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli. These are especially dangerous for puppies. Animal by-products, such as pizzle sticks, pig ears, turkey feet, cow tracheas, etc. also are frequently contaminated. Furthermore, bones break teeth. Anything hard is a risk, not only to small puppy teeth but to adult teeth as well.
- Chicken jerky (dried chicken meat) was identified years ago as an occasional cause of death in dogs. The FDA has not been able to figure out the exact cause of these deaths, so we don't recommend you give any of these products.
- Except for fresh vegetables and fruit, or small amounts of plain meat or bread, human food should generally not be used as a treat or snack, as it is typically high in calories, salt and fat.
- Treats do not always have to be food. Treats can also be tummy rubs, playing with a new toy or a walk.