

Feeding Your Puppy



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Start healthy feeding habits as soon as your puppy arrives! Excellent nutrition will influence your puppy's health issues, development, appearance and attitude. How you feed your puppy will also influence many behaviour aspects, from house training to begging. It is very important to prevent your puppy from gaining too much weight, which can predispose your new pet to obesity and its associated health problems later in life. The following tips will get you off to a good start.

- **Choose your puppy's diet carefully.** There is excessive and confusing information in the market regarding puppy foods. The old adage "you get what you pay for" applies particularly well to pet foods. We encourage you to not compare food by the "Guaranteed Analysis" on the label. This is based on a chemical analysis only and measures gross quantities of ingredient classes – it tells you nothing about the quality of digestibility of the ingredients. Highly digestible puppy food means you feed less. We are interested in your puppy's health and well-being and helping you understand the differences in food and how they impact your puppy. Be sure to feed your puppy a diet that has successfully completed an AAFCO growth trial.
- **Do not "free choice feed" your puppy.** Free choice feeding can contribute to digestive upset (vomiting and diarrhea), bloating, difficulty in house training and obesity. The best approach is to feed your puppy's daily allotment of food in two or three measured meals a day. If you find your puppy consistently isn't finishing its meal but is otherwise doing well, cut back on the total daily allotment. On the other hand, even if your puppy devours the meal in a few minutes, do not give more food. Watch your puppy's body condition and review this with us at each visit.
- **Avoid feeding your puppy "human food".** Establishing right from the start that "human food" is off-limits will reduce begging and an increased risk of obesity. It also minimizes the chance of dogs becoming very picky eaters. If you must feed some human food, stick to small amounts of low calorie options such as vegetables, rice and cooked lean meat. Put these foods in your puppy's bowl! Never feed your puppy from the table.
- **Offer healthy treats.** We all like to treat our puppies. It helps us in socializing, training and just plain loving them. Ask us about healthy, low calorie treats for your puppy. Remember many treats on the market have more calories than you find in a 1/2 cup of puppy food!
- **Use meals as a house training opportunity.** Puppies normally eliminate 5 to 15 minutes after eating a meal. Therefore, after feeding take your puppy outside to the appropriate place in your yard where you would like it to eliminate, and wait for the magic moment. Praise your puppy for a job well done! Puppies also need to eliminate after nap and play sessions. Use this to your advantage in training and avoiding accidents!
- **Food is an excellent training tool.** Talk to us about training your puppy with regards to food rewards. It makes training easier and more positive for you and your puppy.



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- **Feed your puppy in a quiet place.** This helps establish consistency, reduces excitement around a meal and reduces the incidence of stomach upset. Avoid feeding just prior to or just after exercise.
- **Change diets slowly.** If you are changing your puppy's diet, mix the new food with the previous diet in small amounts the first day or two. Then the portion of the new diet can be gradually increased over a week or so until your puppy is completely on the new diet. This will reduce the likelihood of vomiting and diarrhea. Your puppy should make a formed stool, which is easy to pick up. Please inform us if this is not the case. Also let us know how many times a day your puppy has a bowel movement. This information will help us to assess the health status of your puppy, quality of the food it is eating and will help you in your house training efforts.
- **Bones and milk.** Please do not feed your puppy any bones. Digestive disturbances, bone fragments and their resulting damage can require the use of medication and possibly surgery. We would be happy to provide you with suggestions for appropriate chew toys. Many puppies cannot digest milk and get diarrhea. This can also interfere with the absorption of nutrients from the intestinal tract.

