

Frequently Asked Questions On Puppy Nutrition

Q. *How much food should I feed my puppy?*

A. To start, use the recommended feeding guided on the bag of food. Give your puppy about 5-7 minutes to eat their meal then pull up the food dish. Try to feed 3 meals per day until your puppy is 4 months old, then you can switch to 2 meals per day. Since every pet is different and has a different metabolism, just like people, you will probably need to adjust the amount that you feed over time. Bringing your pet in to chart their weight as they grow can help you determine the ideal amount of food to feed your pet, as well as get tips and advice from our staff.

Q. *Is hard food better than soft food?*

A. Neither type of food is recommended over the other- both are typically nutritionally balanced (check the label to be sure). Some dry diets, like Hill's t/d, are helpful in reducing plaque build-up in dogs. However, brushing your pet's teeth at home and adhering to a dental routine can make a much more significant difference in your pet's oral health.

Q. *Is premium food really worth the extra money you have to pay for it?*

A. Even with pet food, you get what you pay for. Premium food contains higher quality ingredients, and is more accurately formulated for your pet's nutrition. There is less "filler" in premium pet foods, therefore you can feed your pet a smaller amount to fulfill their needs. It will also reduce the amount of waste your pet produces, making housetraining and yard clean up easier.

Q. *My veterinarian recommends a different brand of food than the breeder used, and I want to change brands. Do I need to be cautious when changing my puppy's food?*

A. Changing diets for your pet should be done slowly, over a period of time, so your puppy can adjust. First, find out how much your dog is eating at each meal. To initiate the change, start by mixing the new food with the old food (25% new food, 75% old food). Feed this ratio of old food to new food for a few days. Then, change to 50% of each kind of food and feed that mixture for a few days. As a final step, mix 25% old food with 75% new food and feed this mixture for a few days. After that final step, your pet is ready to be fed the new diet exclusively.

Q. *Should I alternate between flavors of the same brand of dog food so my puppy can enjoy variety?*

A. Actually, this is a common misconception- dogs have *more* problems with changes in their diet, and it can cause diarrhea or other symptoms. It's best to stay with one brand and one type (flavor) of food. Pets don't have the same taste buds that people do, and would be perfectly happy eating the same kind of food for their entire lives.

Q. *When should I change my puppy over from the puppy formula food to the adult formula?*

A. We recommend feeding puppy formulated food until your pet is 80% of their estimated adult size. Then change your pet over to the adult formula slowly, mixing with the puppy formula, so that you don't upset their stomach. For large breed dogs (dogs that will be at least 50# when they are full grown), it is recommended to feed large breed puppy food until you switch over to an adult food.

Q. *I've been told my new Yorkie puppy should be fed more frequently because he is so small. Why is this true?*

A. Smaller and toy breed puppies are at a higher risk for hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. Special care should be taken to make sure these puppies eat several meals throughout the day to prevent a drop in blood glucose, which can be fatal. Even if food is left out available for your pet during the day, do not assume they are eating enough to diminish the risk for hypoglycemia. Many toy breed puppies will not eat enough or often enough on their own to prevent this from happening. If you have a toy breed puppy, it's a good idea to keep Karo syrup on hand and be aware of the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia- disorientation, incoordination, confusion, vomiting, lethargy/weakness, seizures, and possibly coma or death. **If you suspect hypoglycemia in your puppy, call the hospital at once and give Karo syrup by mouth. Even if your puppy can't swallow, just dab the syrup on the gums and tongue.**

Q. *On my pet's food label there was a disclaimer that read "for supplemental feeding only". Is it ok to feed my pet this food?*

A. This type of pet food should only be given as a treat, because it's not balanced nutritionally. It cannot be fed as an exclusive diet, or it could cause your pet health problems and nutrient deficiencies. It's a very good idea to read the labels on your pet

food to bring your attention to disclaimers such as these, which are often in small print and possibly difficult to read.