

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR FEEDING YOUR PUPPY

Start healthy feeding habits as soon as your puppy arrives! Excellent nutrition will influence your puppy's health status, 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 it 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" probably applies particularly well to pet foods. We encourage you not to compare foods by the "Guaranteed Analysis" on the label. This is based on a chemical analysis only - it tells you nothing about the quality or digestibility of the ingredients. Highly digestible puppy foods mean 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.

- **Benefits of excellent nutrition**

Canine Development and Adolescent provide your puppy with exceptional nutritional quality. While eating these diets, we expect your puppy to have a luxurious, shiny coat, to be bright and lively, have strong healthy teeth and gums, and make small, well-formed stools. Superior nutrition helps puppies build bone, muscle, tissue, and boosts their immune system to help fight disease.

- **Do not "free choice feed" your puppy**

Free choice feeding is essentially feeding your puppy as much as it wants to eat. 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 three or four measured meals a day. If your puppy hasn't eaten its measured amount of food within 15 minutes, remove it. Continue on with the same measured portion at the next meal. 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 its 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 ½ cup of puppy food!

- **Use meals as a house training opportunity**

Puppies normally eliminate five to fifteen minutes after eating a meal. Therefore, after feeding, take your puppy outside to the appropriate place in your yard where you would like him/her 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 using food rewards. It makes training easier and more positive for you and your puppy.

- **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 after exercise.

- **Change diets slowly**

If you are changing your puppy's diet, gradually introduce the new diet over 7-10 days. Mix a small amount (1/4 of ration) with the previous diet for the first day or two. Then increase the portion of the new diet over the next week, until your puppy is only eating the new diet. This will reduce the likelihood of vomiting and diarrhea. Your puppy should make formed stools, which are easy to pick up. Please inform us if this is not the case.

- **Bones, milk and raw meat**

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 may develop diarrhea, as a result. All your puppy needs to drink is fresh, clean water.

Raw meat can contain a number of pathogenic bacteria and parasites that would be hazardous to your puppy's health. A complete raw meat diet is not a balanced diet and would have a large number of nutrient deficiencies.

Medi-Cal®/Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Development and Adolescent are excellent diets for growing puppies. Ask us which one is ideal for your puppy.