

Feeding Puppies

Plain Yogurt/Cottage Cheese

A great treat to give once or twice a week. Plain yogurt is best (no extra sugar added) and helps to support the digestive tract by providing good bacteria.

Summary:

Puppies should be fed 4-5 % of their body weight – weighing them every couple of weeks and adjusting the amount fed accordingly.

I.e. a dog that weighs 10lbs would be getting approx. 0.4 to 0.5lbs of food/day. A generic kitchen scale can be used to weigh out the amount fed.

Split this 4-5 % into 3 or 4 smaller meals daily – As the puppy grows (4-5 months for smaller breeds or 7-8 months for larger dogs) slowly taper off to 2 meals a day. As the puppy reaches 1 year old gradually aim closer to feeding 3% of their body weight.

Meet you puppy's nutritional needs by feeding variety. The concept is much the same as how you meet your needs with your diet.

Grow your puppy slowly – Avoid the pudgy puppy look, this extra weight only causes more strain on their joints.

Weaning From Mom –

Once the puppies are mobile and their eyes are open (about 3.5 weeks) they are introduced to chicken backs (one to every two puppies). Necks can be used as well for smaller breeds (Bernese Mountain Dogs have a strong sucking reflex and could conceivably inhale the entire neck).

The pups are allowed to play with the backs for 10 or 15 minutes at which point mom is allowed in the whelping box to clean up the food. This process is continued for about 4 or 5 days after which the puppies are introduced to their first meal of ground chicken (bone-in). After about a week or two of plain chicken vegetables and fruit can be introduced into their diet, either mixed in with the chicken or on their own.

Other varieties of meat are introduced slowly and by seven weeks the pups are eating whatever mom is having for her meal. Their diet now consists of a wide variety of meats, bones, veggies, fruit, eggs and organ meat. Once mom has stopped nursing some supplements are added to the puppy's meals (see the list given below) and they are happy, raw-fed pups.

New Puppy Owners:

When making the transition to raw food it is best to do so cold turkey – DO NOT mix dry or canned food with raw. These foods are primarily grain based and are digested at a different rate than raw food. Mixing the two forces the digestive system work harder to digest the meal and may lead to problems.



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MAKING THE SWITCH:

Some new owners may choose to delay the switch a few days to allow the puppy to adjust to the stresses of a new home before throwing in the new element of a different diet. However, if your puppy has come from a breeder that feeds raw this is not a concern and you will already have an idea regarding the basis of their diet up to that point.

Start out simple with a diet such as chicken with veggies and fruit for the first couple of weeks. If you suspect that your dog may have food allergies you could try feeding simply ground chicken or turkey, adding in vegetables and fruit as tolerated. Both options include ground bone material – allowing your dog access to essential minerals such as calcium. When you do start to add variety to their diet do so slowly and gradually. This allows you the time to assess how your dog is dealing with each new food. If your dog is going to have issues with one particular food or supplement it will be much easier to pinpoint and deal with.

The Basic Diet:

Chicken w/veggies and fruit or turkey w/veggies and fruit

Depending upon your preference and/or your dog's tolerance. Both veggie and fruit blends have bone ground in and add the benefit of extra vitamins, minerals as well as some fibre to your pet's diet.

Additional Meals:

Bones – Chicken backs, chicken or turkey necks

Bones can be fed as a meal itself (based upon weight) daily or a few times a week. This allows their jaws, gums and teeth to get needed exercise, while also providing your dog with minerals (I.e. calcium) and natural cartilage/joint tissue.

Organ Meats – Liver, kidney, heart, gizzards and tripe:

An important source of nutrients – Liver for example is high in iron, calcium, magnesium, potassium, folate, vitamin C and vitamin A. In general organ meats are higher in fat. For this reason some people choose to feed them as part of a meal, mixed in with the basic diet. Generally the higher fat content is not an issue but can cause looser stools in some dogs if fed frequently.

Alternate Meat Sources – plain ground chicken or turkey, beef, beef w/veggies and fruit, fish: Great for offering variety and once adjusted to the new foods they can be added in to your dog's diet a couple times a week. It is important to note that beef and/or beef with veggies and fruit should not form the staple of your pet's diet – they do not have ground bone material and therefore do not supply the needed calcium.

Additional vegetables and fruit

Fruit and veggies can be given as a treat – a good alternative to dog biscuits for those dogs allergic to grain. You can also always add your own extra fruits and vegetables to your dog's meal – this will offer various nutritional benefits and is helpful for those dogs trying to slim down or those who never seem to be full (adds bulk without adding too many extra calories).

Supplement Options:

Sea Kelp

An excellent overall food to add 3 or 4 times a week to help meet your dog's vitamin and mineral needs. Kelp includes essential minerals such as iodine, calcium, potassium as well as precursors to vitamin E and essential amino acids.

Oils

An overall marine oil (such as salmon oil or arctic vigor) helps to provide omega-3 fatty acids and can be given 3 to 5 times a week. These essential fatty acids are important in the development of cell membranes, reproduction and hair development. Adding an oil like cod liver oil also provides these omega-3 fatty acids (although to a lesser degree than marine oils) but also supplies vitamins A and D. Another option includes using a 3-6-9 oil blend that provides omega-3, 6 and 9 fatty acids. However, this may not be an option for you if your pet has a grain allergy as they often contain flaxseed oil.

Eggs

An easy and cheap way to add an alternate protein source – fed raw of course. As well eggs supply important nutrients such as biotin, vitamin B-12, vitamin A, vitamin D and essential fatty acids. Most dogs love them and you can simply add them to their meal a few times a week. The eggshells can also be saved to use as an occasional calcium supplement (when feeding meals that do not have bone content). The general rule of thumb when doing so is 1 tsp/pound of meat. Supplementing calcium in this way should only be done occasionally.