



FLOSSMOOR
Animal Hospital



FEEDING YOUR NEW PUPPY

Our puppy's diet is the first important health decision we will make for our new friend. While we want to make sure our puppies are getting all the nutrition they need it is equally important that we are not over feeding. A growing puppy that is overweight can have a number of health problems as an adult. Puppies' joints are not fully formed until over a year. Carrying excess weight as a youngster can contribute to hip dysplasia and other joint problems. Here are some guidelines to help you make the right choice for your puppy.

What type of diet is best:

There are so many wonderful puppy foods on the market. Always chose a food that meets AAFCO standards and is life stage appropriate. We recommend feeding a diet that contains grains. Grains are good for dogs and grain free boutique and exotic diets have been associated with heart disease. Your veterinarian can advise you with any questions you have regarding a specific diet.

How much and how often:

Puppies have different requirements at different stages of their development. Large-breed puppies have different needs than small breed puppies. At 6-16 weeks most puppies will need feedings 3 times daily. At 4 months of age we can safely move to twice a day feedings. As far as amount of food to feed, a good gauge is usually $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup per 10 pounds of body weight 3 times a day for young puppies. As your puppy grows you will probably have to increase the amount fed per feeding, especially when you move to twice a day feedings. All puppies are different. You may find that an active hunting breed needs more at times while puppies that are less active need less. Let the body condition of your puppy be your guide. You always want to be able to feel ribs without seeing them.

Meal Feeding:

It is always best to encourage your puppy to meal eat. Leaving food down all day free choice can encourage fussy eating. It also makes house breaking difficult. It's much easier to predict an elimination schedule if your puppy is on a feeding schedule. A good rule of thumb is whatever your puppy doesn't eat within the first 15 mins of putting down, pickup. If there is a large amount left it may indicate that you are over feeding.

If you're doing a lot of training adjust the amount of food that you are putting in the bowl. It's always a good idea to use some of your puppy's daily allotment of food for training. Treats are important for motivation while training, we just want to be sure they're not making up too much of the puppy's diet.