

## Feeding your new puppy

Posted on Feb 22, Posted by [Trusty Vet](#) Category [Pet Care Tips](#)



There are many available formulations of puppy food to purchase for your new canine companion. The best type of food to feed is a small kibble that your puppy chews in his or her back teeth. The harder kibble helps to keep your dog's oral health at its best and avoids the excessive calories found in canned food. There are mini kibbles and diets for large breed puppies that provide different sizes of the kibble to fit the size of the puppies mouth. Puppies should be fed a growth formulation until they have been spayed or neutered. At this point, their metabolism goes through a transition and they require the fewer calories that are provided in adult formulations.

Puppies need to be fed three times a day until they reach 12 weeks of age. Then, the midday feeding can be stopped and they can be fed once or twice daily. I prefer that dogs are meal fed rather than fed free choice because of obesity problems in the general canine population. Meal feeding allows you to measure how much your dog is eating. It also can be helpful should you have multiple dogs in one household and one pet requires a prescription diet.

Many pet owners associate meal time as a display of affection to their dogs. I would encourage you to promote active play with toys and regular walks as a replacement to meal time affection. This can help you avoid being awakened earlier and earlier every morning and also maintain your canine companion at a healthy weight to assure a long and full-filling life.

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