

## **PUPPY DIET ADVICE**

### **Little and often**

Like all infants, puppies grow very rapidly (up to twenty times faster than an adult dog), and so require a specially formulated diet to aid their physical development.

A high energy growth food is recommended and needs to be fed at evenly spaced intervals to avoid over stretching your puppy's small stomach.

Feed your puppy four meals a day up until the age of 10 weeks, and then reduce its feed to three meals a day until it is six months old, when you can change to one or two meals a day, and keep it on this regime for the rest of its life.

There are many varied feeding regimes to choose from: dry complete diets, semi-moist or pouch, tinned food (with or without biscuit). Each food category has different qualities, and finding the right balance for your puppy is extremely important.

The most suitable diet should be easily digested and produce dark brown, firm, formed stools.

Please remember that stability in the diet will help maintain good digestion. Any change in diet should be made very gradually over at least a week to avoid upset and you should try a new diet for at least 10 days before making any further changes.

Meals should be split during the course of the day and ideally a young puppy should go at least 4 hours between meals. Typical feeding times would be:

8.00 AM

12.00 Midday

4.00 PM

8.00 PM

It is better not to leave food down (so throw away any uneaten food after 20 minutes) and not to change your puppy's food regularly as this could cause havoc with its digestion and toilet training regime. However, make sure that water is always available to your puppy, so never take its water bowl away.

### **Quantities**

The quantity of food should be approximately the same for each meal. Increases of food should always be gradual and a good idea is to increase the amount on a weekly basis from 8 weeks until the puppy is 16 weeks old. Typically, by the time a puppy reaches 16 weeks, it will need roughly the same amount as when it is an adult.

Puppies can be greedy or picky with their food so it can sometimes be difficult to gauge how much to give them. Care should be taken not to over or underfeed your puppy. Puppies can often appear 'chubby', particularly after they have eaten, but under normal circumstances they should have a defined 'waist'. If in any doubt about your puppy's weight or diet, consult your vet when you next visit for a puppy check-up.

### **Dry complete foods**

There is a wide range of dry complete foods on the market and the quality varies widely. To get the best out of your puppy's development choose a food specially designed for puppies. Some puppies are not accustomed to complete dry foods immediately after weaning but will normally grow to like them with time. If your puppy does not seem to like eating dry complete and this is what you wish to feed, you can try soaking the food in a little warm water to soften it, or mix in a little tinned puppy food, gradually reducing the quantity until your puppy is fully weaned and accepts dry complete.