



"...animal healthcare you can trust"

The Andys Veterinary Clinic

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PIN No.: P051158083H

Puppy Care And Feeding

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations for having acquired a puppy in your family!! Your dog will give you an enormous amount of companionship, love and affection for many years. You will also gain a good measure of protection and much-needed support from your dog in the present day society. Your dog will also give you immediate, unstinting and generous love and affection.

A newborn puppy is completely dependent on its mother, is only minimally mobile and its eyes are closed. The eyes open at about 3 – 10 days old.

Puppies start to become less dependent upon their mother for nutrition at ~ 3 weeks of age, and mobility and interaction increase thereafter.

Weaning is the period of time during which the young animal is introduced to alternative foods to its mother's milk, and continues until the pup has complete dietary independence of its mother. Weaning usually commences at ~3weeks of age and is complete from about 6 weeks. Weaning is a phase of rapid growth and development.

FEEDING AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Most rapid growth period is during the first 6 months which determines the body weight at maturity which is ~ 40 – 50 times the birth weight. As such, a balanced diet formulated for growth is essential, primarily increased energy, protein, calcium and phosphorus, essential vitamins and trace minerals e.g., zinc.

NB: Growing dogs do NOT have different nutrient requirements from adults – it is the amount required that alter.

FEEDING PROCEDURE

Diet change

A regime of liquid, semi-solid, solid food supplementation is gradually introduced to the puppy as there is a decreased requirement/demand for mother's milk and gradual decrease in dietary dependency on its mother.

Do not change the diet within 2-3 days after moving to new home.

Gradually introduce any new food by mixing it in quarter increments with old diet.

Quantities and frequency

Feed moderately restricted levels of a well-balanced diet to result in a normal adult final body size and development at a later age. Overfeeding during infancy or adolescence may lead to a higher total body fat in adulthood resulting in obesity with increased difficulty in weight reduction and maintenance.

Birth to 3 weeks old: Puppies rely almost entirely on their mother's milk. They feed very frequently and sleep much of the rest of the time.



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3 Weeks to weaning (6 weeks):

Puppies begin to take some solid food, and a thick gruel made from warm water and milk mixed with female's food should be provided. Place in shallow dish and give fresh several times daily. Puppies should be allowed to eat to appetite in between the periods when their mother allows suckling.

! Cow's milk has higher [lactose] than female's and may cause diarrhea. Avoid dairy products.

Between 8 and 10 weeks old:

Puppies can readily eat semi-solid / chew and eat solid food as milk teeth have erupted. Both nutritional and behavioral weaning is complete at this time. Biscuits softened with milk or water can be introduced and the puppies fed every 4 hours during a sixteen-hour day. It is at this time that the puppy usually goes to its permanent home and a new routine is introduced.

Weaning to 4 months old:

The meal frequency can be gradually reduced from 4 to 3 meals/day.

Between 4 and 6 months:

2 meals/day

After 6 months:

Whatever the adult regime is to be (one or two meals a day), this can be gradually established once the dog is sexually mature.

NB: Large breeds reach maturity/mature size at 1.6 – 2 years old, while smaller breeds at 0.6 – 1 years old.

- Always allow a free access to clean, cool water throughout the day, and should be replenished /changed twice a day.
- Feeders and drinkers should be washed with detergents to reduce disease incidences.
- The dog kennel/house should be maintained clean by washing and disinfecting it twice daily.
- Provide your puppy with big bones to fortify the teeth and check gum disease, provide a tangible source of calcium and phosphorus for effective bone and teeth growth, and abate oral displeasure due to teething.



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Table 1: Approximate Amounts to Feed Puppies

Size	Small	Medium	Large
Adult Bodyweight	4.5 -9kg	9-22kg	22kg and above
Up to 12 weeks	25 - 80g	85 -140g	100 -160g
12-16 weeks	55 -140g	100 -165g	140 - 250g
16 weeks – 1year	85 -140g	140 - 225g	225 - 335g

EXERCISE

This is important and should be vigorous taking ~ 20 – 40 minutes/day. It promotes proper energy balance and normal lean, well muscled development. Prolonged exercise concusses developing joints.

DE-WORMING

Starting from the 2nd week, puppies need to be de-wormed once every 2 weeks until they are 6 months old, and then once monthly until they are adults[~ 12 – 18 months old], and thereafter once every 3 months.

Practice good hygiene and de-worm the bitch also whenever you do the puppies as they are carriers of most worms. Regular de-worming starting at 2 weeks is thus essential because some puppies get infected by their mothers.

Other puppies, and even adult dogs, get infected by their adventurous eating habits by feeding on insects such as lizards, grasshoppers, frogs, cockroaches, etc, or even from scavenging.

Worms can really cause growth impairment and development in puppies and cause unthriftiness in adult dogs.

NB: Do not feed raw meat to dogs; they can too transmit worms, especially tape worms.

FLEAS, TICKS, MITES AND LICE

These need to be controlled on a weekly basis, but since puppies have a thin layer of skin, strong preparations against ticks and fleas cannot be used on them. As such mild shampoos are the only ones used on puppies until they are 6 months old, then strong preparations can be used, i.e. any animal skin conditioning shampoo can be used, but the manufacturer's directions need to be followed.

The above parasites bite and or nourish blood from your pet and may dispatch disease causing organisms e.g., rickettsia which cause tick fever, and worms e.g. tape worms from fleas, to your



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pet. The wounds that result also act as portals of entry for bacteria and viruses and most of them cause severe skin irritation and itchiness. Regular washing with medicated shampoos/preparations enable the above parasites to be put at bay.

VACCINATION PROGRAMMES FOR DOGS

Vaccinations are given to puppies (and dogs) to protect them against infectious diseases. These are with the knowledge that certain diseases due to micro-organisms cause a reaction in the individual which helps to protect it against further attacks from that particular infectious agent. The technique of vaccination provokes this response without the disease.

Vaccines do not give the animal the disease; they do not even give the protection directly. What they do is to allow the animal to generate its own protection, that is, to produce immunity.

The has thus to be sufficiently healthy and mature enough as puppies are born with a certain degree of immunity from their mothers, known as maternal immunity, which can interfere with the development of a lasting response to vaccination. Maternal immunity is only temporary, and declines rapidly at about the time of weaning.

When you purchase a puppy, make sure it's between eight and ten weeks and that you are issued with a vaccination certificate signed by a veterinary surgeon to show which vaccinations have been done for you to be able to know which ones are pending. In case no vaccination records are available, it should be assumed that there is no protection at all and a course of injections need to be started from the beginning.

No vaccine is 100% sure of protecting all dogs in all cases, but thankfully failures are rare, and at least no dog suffers ill effects from the vaccine itself.

PRIMARY VACCINATIONS:

1. Parvo-viral Enteritis

This is done to healthy dogs which are 6 weeks or older. They should receive 3 doses each administered 3 weeks apart i.e. at 6, 9, and 12 weeks of age.

2. Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Adenovirus Type2-Parainfluenza (Respiratory Disease), Leptospirosis and Canine Parvoviral Enteritis

Canine distemper and hepatitis are both virus diseases and highly infectious and cause a wide range of severe clinical signs. Treatment is often unrewarding and usually lengthy. It is very frustrating as well, as the dog may appear to get better, only to relapse just as hopes were rising.

Vaccine against these diseases is a combined vaccine given to puppies which are 9weeks or older. Two vaccinations only are needed if puppies were vaccinated against parvoviral enteritis at 6 weeks old i.e. this vaccine is given at 9 and 12 weeks old. This vaccination also boosts the parvoviral enteritis vaccine

3. Rabies

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This is the worst disease and can dogs with extremely unpleasant symptoms, while presenting a fearful hazard to public health.

First Rabies vaccination is administered at 12 weeks old (3 months of age) or older to healthy dogs and cats. Second Rabies vaccination is given at 16 weeks (4 months).

BOOSTER VACCINATIONS

Dogs, as all other animals, are biological systems and not pieces of machinery. As such they do not react or behave in the same way. Cases do occur when a dog is completely unable to develop an immunity; on the other hand, there are many dogs that respond to vaccination by setting up an immunity that lasts for several years.

Booster vaccinations of dogs are thus done annually as a matter of routine, to ensure that the degree of protection does not fall dangerously low. By the end of a year, the immunity against the above diseases usually has gone down hence the need to boost the dog's immunity again.

	USUAL	VACCINATION	TIMETABLE
	Parvo-virus infection	Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvo(DHLP)	Rabies Annual Boosters
6 Weeks old	+		All the vaccinations need to be boosted annually As a matter of routine, to ensure that the degree of protection does not fall dangerously low.
8 - 9Weeks old	+	+	
12 Weeks old	+	+	

GROOMING

All dogs need grooming, and the sooner the routine is established the easier it is to maintain. Some light brushing should start as soon as new puppy has had a chance to its new environment.

If this is done for frequent, very short spells, it becomes part of the dog's life and many individuals look forward to the attention they get from their owners. A nylon brush, with bristles on one side and metal on the other, is invaluable for regular use. A metal-toothed comb should deal with most matted areas if there is no delay in clearing them once they form.



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Each dog should have some old towels for canine use only.

Regular grooming will thus:-

- Make your lovely pet look neat and tidy
- Untangle bunched hair
- Excerpt eggs of external parasites from strands of hair
- Make your pet feel appreciated.

BATHING

Bathing has to be introduced in every dog's pattern of life. It is not difficult to bath dogs, no more than it is with small children if the practice is time-honored. Small dogs can be bathed in a sink or large wash basin. Bigger varieties have to be put into the bath itself or, when the weather is kind, in a tub outside.

Take special care when bathing puppies under six months old, ensuring that they do not take a chill when wet; and in cold weather, dogs of all sizes require this precaution. Also note that a puppy's skin is very sensitive and "porous" to strong washing preparations hence make it a habit to read the instructions on whatever preparation you are buying to avoid poisoning your lovely puppy.

CLAWS

Dogs have a pad and a claw on the four toes of each leg. The main claws are normally just clear of the ground. Many dogs have additional claws on the inside of the leg. These are called "dew" claws and have very little function as far as most breeds concerned. They are usually removed (by a vet) very early in the lives of puppies - that is before the eyes open, at about 10 days.

Overgrown claws usually quite obvious as they will begin to turn over where they touch the ground. The dew claws, if retained, may also overgrow into the pad. This quickly results in a painful wound in the leg which will become infected and needs attention without delay.

One of the main problems with overgrown claws is that, in the hairier breeds at least, it is easy to miss a hidden claw. For this and other reasons of hygiene, it is best to keep the hair short around the feet.



Figure 1: - This dog has tangled hair which is causing a lot of discomfort due to improper grooming



Figure 2 This dog has been receiving proper grooming