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Popular Article

# Feeding Management of New Born Puppies

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## Introduction

The neonatal period in puppies and kittens is considered to be the first 2 weeks after birth. The offspring of dogs and cats are altricial, which means that puppies and kittens are born in a relatively immature state and are completely dependent upon their mother's care. As puppies are growing rapidly, and their digestive and immune systems are developing slowly, they have very specific nutritional needs that are different from adult dogs. Feeding puppy, a nutritionally complete diet tailored to their specific needs is vital for supporting healthy development and laying the foundation for a healthy future. Because of these various reasons, there is special need for feeding management of new born puppies.

## Importance of colostrum feeding

The dog has an endotheliochorial placenta consisting of four layers. This type of placenta allows only about 10% to 20% of passive immunity to be transferred in utero. Therefore, for puppies and kittens, the major proportion of passive immunity is acquired after birth via the colostrum. This emphasizes the importance of immediate nursing and the provision of colostral antibodies and bioactive factors to puppies immediately after birth. The intestinal mucosa of newborn dogs is capable of absorbing intact immunoglobulins provided by colostrum. The time during which the newborn's gastrointestinal tract is permeable to the intact immunoglobulins in colostrum is very short. The term closure refers to the change in the gastrointestinal tract's absorptive capacity that precludes further absorption of large, intact proteins.



## **Feeding of puppies**

Puppies need special food that meets their energy requirements. Some dog owners prepare homemade foods for their pets. But it is difficult even for an experienced breeder to get the nutritional balance just right. The best idea is to get puppy used to eating prepared foods from the very start. Proper nutrition allows for the puppy to reach his full genetic potential, but beware of overfeeding as this could result in bone anomalies, which are common in puppies of large/giant breeds. Puppies are normally weaned from their mother's milk onto solid foods when they are three to four weeks old. We should start by giving food in small portions three or four times a day. Weight for weight, a puppy needs up to 2.5 times as many calories as an adult dog and must be given a very digestible diet so his body can absorb all the nutrients. If the new puppy gets an upset stomach, take him off solid food for two meals, and just give him small quantities of water to drink. Then, gradually introduce boiled rice and scrambled eggs over 24 hours, before reintroduce his normal puppy food again. Once the puppy has settled in, we likely to change diet to special puppy food such as Pedigree® Puppy. We must make sure that we must replace the original food with the new food gradually as specified on the packaging.

## **Introduction of solid food**

Supplemental food should be introduced to puppies when they are 3 to 4 weeks of age. A commercial food made specifically for weaning puppies or kittens can be used, or a thick gruel can be made by mixing a small amount of warm water with the mother's food. Cow's milk should not be used to make the gruel because it is higher in lactose than bitch's and queen's milk and may cause diarrhoea. Puppy should also not be fed a homemade "weaning formula." Although the foods that are used to make these formulas are usually of high nutrient value, many homemade formulas are not nutritionally balanced or complete. The use of this type of formula should be avoided unless its exact nutrient composition is known. The semisolid food should be provided in a shallow dish, and puppies can be allowed access to fresh food several times per day.

## **Puppy's considerations**

Large-breed puppies need slow, sustained growth to help prevent orthopaedic problems, such as hip dysplasia. Raise them on a diet designed for large-breed dogs or food for adult dogs. Whatever diet we choose should not overemphasize protein, fat, and calorie levels. Small but chunky breeds, such as pugs, also need a lower-calorie diet than what is provided by most puppy foods, because they are also prone to hip dysplasia.



Feed puppy at set times each day rather than leaving food out all the time so he learns a schedule. The exceptions are tiny breeds such as Chihuahuas, who can be prone to hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). They should always have food available to nibble on.

### **Feeding of orphan puppy**

One of the greatest challenges involved in raising orphaned puppies is providing them with adequate nutrition. The alternative is to provide nutrition through a well-formulated milk replacer. A milk replacer will nourish the puppies and kittens for the first few weeks of life until their digestive and metabolic functions develop to the point at which semisolid food can be introduced. It is important that the chosen formula closely approximates the composition of the natural milk of the bitch. Evaporated cow's milk is occasionally recommended for raising orphans because it has levels of protein, fat, calcium, and phosphorus that are similar to bitch's milk. However, the lactose content of evaporated milk is still much too high for young puppies. In addition, the casein-to-whey protein ratio in cow's milk is not ideal for puppies, and cow's milk contains an excessive proportion of casein for neonatal kittens.

### **Different phases of dog feeding**

- a. **One month old:** - At one month, a puppy can start to be gradually weaned from its mother's milk onto solid food. They need nutrients to build their natural defences and promote good bacteria in their delicate digestive system.
- b. **Two to four months:** - At this stage, the focus is on supporting the development of puppy's skeletal structure with carefully regulated amounts of calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin-D.
- c. **Four to seven months:** - Puppy is starting to build its body mass at this age and needs plenty of high-quality protein that is easy to digest.
- d. **Ten months old to adulthood:** - As puppies approach adulthood, they still need extra nutritional support for their joints, especially larger breeds as their muscles are filling out and putting pressure on their skeleton.

