

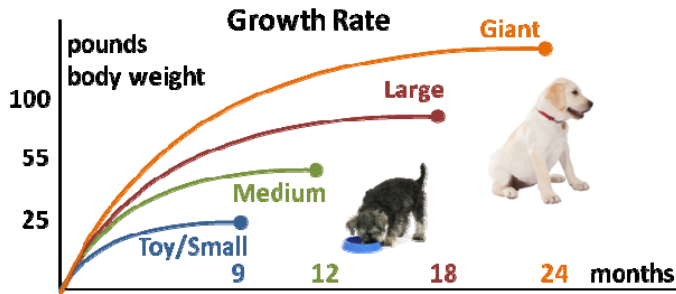


# THE NATURAL AUTHORITY™

## ON PUPPY HEALTH

### Introduction

Dogs are typically considered puppies until one year of age. However, toy and small breeds may be considered an adult earlier (9 months), whereas large (18 months) or giant (24 months) breeds take longer to finish developing into adults.



### Puppy Nutrition

Feeding frequency can decrease as puppies age, with the following recommended minimum meals per day:

- 6-8 weeks – 4-5 meals/day
- 10 weeks – 3 meals/day
- 5-6 months – 2 meals/day
- Adult – 1 meal/day

Even though a puppy may look like an adult before the indicated age of adulthood, it is important to continue feeding puppy food because their body continues to develop. Puppy foods have nutrient levels that are optimized for growth and development. This includes higher levels of protein and fat than adult foods, more restrictive levels of calcium and phosphorus, and higher levels of fatty acids that are essential during growth, such as DHA.

A common concern (especially with large and giant breeds) is skeletal abnormalities caused by a rapid growth rate. While high protein and high calorie puppy foods are often blamed, research shows the important factors for healthy skeletal systems during growth are balanced calcium and phosphorus levels and feeding the appropriate amount of puppy food. Adult dog foods are not always balanced for calcium and phosphorus for puppies and can actually cause skeletal problems if fed too early. This is why it is important to feed a puppy food within the recommended feeding guidelines until a puppy has finished growing and developing to ensure optimal growth, not maximum growth.

**NUTRO® Puppy Foods are formulated to provide complete nutrition for puppies and promote optimal growth and development.**



Reference # DOG04  
Issued: November 11, 2011

### Dental Care

To help keep teeth clean during dental development, feeding a combination of both wet (canned) and dry (kibble) foods provides soft textures for sensitive mouths during teething and crunchy textures which help satisfy a puppy's urge to chew as permanent teeth replace milk teeth during the following stages:

- 3-5 weeks – eruption of milk teeth
- 12-18 weeks – milk teeth replaced by adult teeth
- 6 months – All milk teeth should have fallen out and been replaced with permanent teeth.

The roots of the puppy's permanent teeth are not fully developed until about 10 months of age. Therefore, prior to this age, The Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition (WCPN) recommends not offering puppies hard toys. WCPN also does not recommend giving dogs real animal bones at any age due to the risk of damage to teeth and internal damage from splinters.

### Veterinary Care

Before a new owner brings their puppy home, they should find out what vaccinations and deworming treatments their new puppy has received. New owners should talk to a veterinarian to schedule upcoming vaccinations, deworming and neutering (usually performed around 6 months).

### Socialization & Training

From eight weeks of age, the main aim of socialization is to introduce puppies to a wide range of different people, dogs, objects and situations, so they can cope with any new things they may experience later in life. It is beneficial for puppies to interact with adult dogs to learn and practice appropriate dog behaviors.

Puppies also need to grow accustomed to spending time on their own, away from people and other dogs. Despite having plenty of energy, puppies also tire easily and should be given plenty of quiet time to sleep or relax.

Pet parents may choose to enroll their puppy in more formal obedience training to compliment the daily training that occurs during exercise and interaction with people. As part of a successful training program, treats can be used as positive reinforcement. However, to keep a balanced diet the majority of the nutrition should come from puppy foods, with not more than 10% of calories coming from treats.