

FEEDING GUIDE

Your puppy has been weaned onto a number of different complete dry and wet foods suited to large breed puppies and will also have tried various other kinds of food. I feel that feeding a variety of good quality foods to my dogs may reduce the risk of dogs developing allergies, and recommend that your dog does not eat the same food for every meal for this reason. However, I do also recommend that a good-quality large breed puppy food (or food with a suitable nutritional profile for a large breed puppy) should form the bulk of your dog's diet while it is growing. Please refer to the list of recommended foods for suggestions.

There is no exact amount that you should feed your dog, as each dog has a different metabolism and lifestyle, so some degree of trial and error is required. It's normal for puppies to feel 'bony' while they are growing. If you are not sure what the optimum body condition is, ask your vet to examine your dog. It's important not to overfeed your puppy while it is growing, as overnutrition can cause uncontrolled growth and orthopaedic problems (problems to do with bone and cartilage development). Poodles usually stop growing at a year old and should have filled out properly by age 2. An adult poodle is usually 23-25" at the withers and tends to weigh between 2 1/2 and 4 stone (about 20 kg or a bit more on average). I find my adult dogs eat in total around 400 g of dry food per day, or 800 g of wet food. Pups need to eat more frequently than adults as their stomachs do not have the same capacity. The following is the approximate schedule the puppy has been fed from here and may serve as a useful starting point:

Breakfast (7 am): a handful of dry food, e.g. Applaws large breed puppy

Lunch (12 noon): 200g (a quarter of an 800 g tin) of Lukullus Junior

Dinner (6 pm): a handful of dry food e.g. Little Wolf of Wilderness

Supper (10 pm): another handful of dry food, or a treat meal such as an uncooked, previously frozen chicken wing, a portion of frozen food such as Natural Instinct, safe table scraps, or some sardines from a tin (use the tins with oil in, not brine).

Your puppy is fully weaned and does not need to be given milk.

Young puppies who do not have supper tend to vomit up green froth (bile) in the morning because their stomachs are empty too long. Older puppies can be moved to three meals a day by serving dinner an hour or so later and providing a small snack at bedtime which can gradually be phased out.

If you have other dogs you should keep the puppy away from them while they are eating, and provide a safe place for the puppy to eat where they cannot bother it. A crate is ideal. Dogs will often eat hastily and become stressed at mealtimes if they live in fear of others trying to take their food, and this situation should be avoided.

Adult poodles should ideally be fed three or two meals a day. Do not feed all the dog's daily ration in one meal as this is thought to increase the risk of GDV. Dogs who are very lean are also at increased risk of GDV, so once your poodle has finished growing, feed it sufficient food to enable it to fill out.

Do NOT feed your dog, and seek veterinary advice if you have reason to think your dog may have eaten:

Grapes, including grape products such as raisins, wine, or grape juice

Chocolate (dark chocolate is most dangerous)

Avocados

Anything containing caffeine: tea, coffee, Red Bull, some brands of fizzy pop

Anything containing xylitol: this substance used to be occasionally found in products like mouthwash and medicines, but more recently it is increasingly being used as a substitute for sugar in food items. It is EXTREMELY poisonous to dogs even in small doses and very dangerous since the things it is likely to be found in are obviously food objects and likely to be attractive to a dog that encounters one.

Because of the very serious dangers of xylitol, I would recommend checking everything you buy and avoiding anything containing this substance as much as possible.

If you think your dog has eaten xylitol, chocolate, or grapes/raisins, these are particularly dangerous and getting them out of your dog as fast as possible could mean the difference between life and death. To do this, you need to induce vomiting:

Fill a syringe with 30 ml of 3% hydrogen peroxide solution (you can buy this from a pharmacy and should have it on hand with the syringe in case of emergencies). If the dog in question is elderly, infirm, or a small puppy, or anything other than fully conscious and acting normally at this point, ring your vet FIRST.

Hold the dog's mouth open, point the syringe down into the back of the throat, and discharge the hydrogen peroxide. Hold the dog's mouth shut to make sure it is swallowed.

Either get another person to watch your dog, or keep your dog with you and phone your emergency vet to explain what has happened. The dog should vomit and you need to be able to see this has occurred and what has come out in the vomit. If you are confident everything the dog ate has come out, the vet may not need to see your dog, but it is always a good idea to check. If the dog is not sick within ten minutes, or it is sick but you don't think the dangerous thing has come out in part or at all, you can give the dog another dose of hydrogen peroxide. If the dog is sick (including in the car on the way to the vet) you need to prevent it from re-eating any vomitus.

In addition, do not feed your dog salty, sugary, or spicy foods, cooked poultry with bones in it (without bones is OK), onions and onion-type things such as shallots (can cause anaemia if consumed frequently), booze, nuts, or Bakers dog food (contains sugar and colourants that have no nutritional value). Do not give your dog plastic chews, rawhide, or those green things that look like toothbrushes and are sold in pet shops. These things are indigestible and if your dog swallows them they could cause a bowel obstruction. Instead you can give your dog an antler, an uncooked bone such as a rib from a cow or sheep ('They Love It' the company selling minces for dogs mentioned above, also sells sheep and cow ribs which are excellent chews for dogs), or some dried natural chews such as the Dibo dried chews from Zooplus which are all sourced from EC slaughterhouses (can you tell I really like Zooplus?!).