



# Feeding Your Puppy

For optimal health throughout life

By Gail Fisher

Here's some general information about feeding your puppy we hope you'll find helpful.

**How often to feed:** Like human babies, puppies need several small meals a day depending on their age. Here are general guidelines:

- **Up to 3 months (12 weeks) of age**—4 meals a day (For example, 8 am, noon, 4 pm, 8 pm)
- **From 3-6 months**—3 meals a day (e.g., 8 am, noon, 5 pm)
- **After 6 months** and for the rest of your dog's life, we recommend feeding twice a day to avoid hunger-related behaviors and low blood sugar.

**Amount of food:** As puppies grow, they need increased amounts of food to support their growth. Use your dog's condition as a guide to the right amount to feed. Here are some general guidelines to help figure out the right amount to feed. Gently press on your puppy's ribs:

- At optimum weight you can feel the delineation of her ribs when you lightly stroke her rib cage.
- **Overweight**—If you have to press hard to feel ribs, feed a little less for a few meals to get to optimum weight
- **Too thin**—If you can see her ribs, or they feel like a washboard, increase your puppy's food.

We can help determine your puppy's optimum condition as s/he grows, and will share our observations.

## Food-Related Aggression

If your puppy acts aggressively around food, here are some things to consider:

- **Hunger**—It's important to feed often enough and in sufficient amounts to avoid low blood sugar. Feed the number of meals for your puppy's age, and the amounts for optimum weight (see above).
- **Resource guarding**—If your puppy displays aggression related to food, please talk to us. We can work on "resource guarding" behavior and stop this before it can become an issue. There's a great deal of misinformation on handling this problem. Seek help or it can become worse.

## Where to feed

Feed your puppy where he won't be disturbed. Don't pester or allow children to pester your puppy while he's eating. Dogs deserve to eat in peace, without being stroked, bothered or having their food removed.

## How to feed

Put the dish down, walk away and let your puppy eat. If he doesn't eat, after 20 minutes remove his dish until the next meal. Dogs may refuse a meal because they're being fed too much, they're not feeling well, or to get attention or treats. If your puppy misses two meals in a row, consult your vet. Don't give in to finicky behavior by coaxing, hand feeding or adding tidbits, which rewards picky eating.

*This information is provided to you by Gail & the staff at All Dogs Gym & Inn where our mission is to enrich and enhance the lives of dogs and their owners – for the longest possible life together.*