



Nutritional Requirements of Large and Giant Breed Puppies

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Not all foods are alike. Not all pups are alike. Feeding the right diet to the right puppy is very important, especially when it comes to large or giant breed pups.

Proper Growth Rate -Pups grow up, but it is important that they grow at the proper rate. The framework of the body is composed of muscle and bone which have to grow in synchrony. Rapid growth rates can stress developing bones and joints resulting in skeletal malformations.

Bones that grow too quickly are less dense making the skeleton, including joints, weak. Exponential growth accompanied by increased body mass puts additional strain on bones and joints. So puppies should not get too fat!

Impacted by growth rate, developmental orthopedic disease (DOD) is more prevalent in large breed dogs. Bone and joint disorders such as hip dysplasia and OCD (osteochondritis dissecans) affect many large breed pups with improper nutrition.

Some skeletal problems are associated with genetics and are out of your control. Diet also affects skeletal development and you CAN control what your pup eats!

Nutritional Needs of Large Breed Pups

"How fast a pup grows has to be carefully regulated." Just like human children, puppies do best with a balanced diet of nutrients, protein, carbohydrates, and fat. However dogs vary in size way more than people do and need "size-specific" diets. Great Dane pups grow much faster than Chihuahuas so they should eat different foods.

Regardless of size, pups need specific nutrients because They are constantly on the move and burn more calories. Caloric requirements increase dramatically during the first 12 months of life, but they need to be regulated. Too many calories leads to obesity later in life which also causes orthopedic problems.

How fast a pup grows has to be carefully regulated. Large breed pups grow A LOT! But they should not grow up too fast. **SLOW AND STEADY** is the rule of thumb for their growth to be healthy. About half of the calories that pups consume are used in tissue growth and skeletal development. These calories must come from a balanced diet that promotes healthy bone and muscle growth. Feeding a diet that is too calorically dense (high in fat) can make a pup grow faster than his bones can accommodate resulting in skeletal abnormalities.

Protein content is also crucial. Proteins are the basic building blocks of the body and contribute to healthy muscle development. Growing pups need more protein than adult dogs. On the flip side, too much protein can be detrimental to healthy growth and result in an imbalance of calcium and phosphorus which can negatively affect bone and joint development.

Calcium is needed for strong bones, but is harmful in excess. Pups, unlike adult dogs, cannot adequately regulate how much dietary calcium they absorb from the intestinal tract. Sometimes they absorb and retain too much calcium which can cause skeletal malformations. *Excess calcium also causes deficiencies in other needed nutrients, like phosphorus. Calcium and phosphorus work together and a proper calcium to phosphorus ratio is important for healthy bones and joints.

Nutritional levels to stay around

(Found in Large Breed ADULT food)

Protein 23% . Fat 12% . Calcium 1.2% . Phosphorus .8%

If you give your pup treats, consider the calories they add to the diet. Fruits and vegetables are healthy treat alternatives that add few calories to the diet.

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