

Feeding Schedule for Puppies

The puppy's feeding schedule will be somewhat dictated by your own personal schedule. You do not want to leave food out for the puppy so that he can just eat it whenever he wants. You want the puppy and his entire body on a set feeding and potty schedule. This is best accomplished by feeding the pup what he will eat at specific times on a specific schedule.

Puppies under six months of age should be fed three times daily; after 6 months they may be fed twice daily.

By feeding on a set schedule, the dog will then go to the bathroom on a more set schedule and make housetraining easier and faster.

Make it a habit to give the puppy some quiet time after the meal. Do not let the children romp and play with him for the first hour to an hour and a half after eating. This can lead to some stomach upsets. The puppy will probably need to go to the bathroom within 30 minutes after eating.

A puppy's meal schedule must include three measured meals a day, preferably at the same time every day. The best time for your puppy's first meal is around 7 a.m., noontime for lunch, and 5 p.m. for dinner. The last meal should always be around 5 p.m. so that he will have ample time to digest his food and eliminate one last time before bedtime. Stick to this schedule until the puppy reaches 14 to 18 weeks old, at which point the meal schedule should change to two meals a day (unless your veterinarian suggests otherwise).

The meals should consist of a healthy and well-balanced 'grain free' diet that has been designed for puppies. This means refraining from cheaper dog foods that contains fillers and sugars rather than high quality nutrients. While these foods will make your dog appear to be full and satisfied, they are not giving your dog all the nutrition his growing body requires, and he may feel the need to eat more as he tries to meet those needs. Lesser quality foods can undoubtedly affect the long-term growth and overall health of your puppy as well as cause constipation or diarrhea which makes house training that much more of a challenge. Low quality dog food can also cause skin issues, allergies, dull coats, itchy skin, ear infections etc. So it best to continue feeding the food we have recommended or one of the same quality.

Visit DogFoodAdvisor.com for more info on the best 'grain free' dog foods. Dreamydoodles.com also has several blog posts about the best and worst dog food brands.

Also make sure not to overfeed your puppy, even if he is begging for more. If you have any questions regarding exactly how much food your puppy should be eating in the course of a day, talk to your veterinarian or Dreamydoodles.

In addition, it is best to allow about fifteen minutes to pass after giving the puppy water before you take him outside to eliminate. Of course, you will need to be patient during the learning process and be ready to take him outside again if it appears that he needs to eliminate again.

Once you have introduced your dog to the crate and she has become accustomed to it, you can then start planning out your feeding and potty schedule. It will change as the weeks go by, as your pet learns to become better behaved and less needy and you get used to raising a puppy and the new schedule.

An Example Schedule for Your Puppy and Crate Training

This is just an example, you have your own life schedule so the exact times can obviously be adjusted.

- **6:30 a.m.** wake up, out of the crate, quick exercise
- **7:00 a.m.** morning meal, outdoor walking, playtime then back to crate or enclosure
- **10:00 a.m.** outdoor walking, bonding time with owner then back to crate or enclosure
- **12:00 (noon)** midday meal
- **1:00 p.m.** outdoor walking, playtime then back to crate or enclosure
- **5:00 p.m.** evening meal, outdoor walking, playtime
- **7:00 p.m.** short outdoor walk, playtime, then back to crate or enclosure
- **9:00 p.m.** bedtime (in his crate or in your bedroom)

In the first stages of house-training your puppy, it is best to take him outside to eliminate every 1.5 hours. Give him some water to drink about fifteen minutes before taking him outside. As the house-training progresses, the puppy will be able to last for longer intervals without feeling the need to eliminate.

Right before bedtime, after the puppy has eliminated outside, spend a few minutes playing gently with your puppy – nothing that will get him too excited.

Crate Rules:

- The most common mistake puppy owners make is to give too much freedom too soon.
- The crate is your #1 management tool for potty training and also for house manners.
- This tool alone can make or break housetraining success!
- Never let a crying puppy out of the crate.
- The puppy should be in the crate unless you are actively playing with her.
- Feed your puppy 3 times per day. Leave food out for 15-30 minutes then remove any leftover food.
- Do not leave food out for puppy to eat at will. This helps you determine when she'll have to go potty.

The best dog crate location during the day is where people are the most – the living room, so your dog does not feel isolated. They will feel most comfortable there because in the wild dogs like to stay together in a pack, as they are social animals. So dogs will feel most comfortable being around the people they live with.

What happens if she has an accident?

If your puppy has an accident in front of you, scoop her up and take her outside immediately. Praise her once she goes outside. If your puppy has an accident behind your back, lift your right hand and give yourself a smack on the cheek! You weren't actively playing with her! Do not hit your dog under any circumstances. If your puppy has frequent accidents, modify the crating schedule so that she has less free time. Use the crate as a management tool to prevent accidents.

How will I know when she has to go?

Start watching for cues as to when your puppy has to go potty. Most puppies display sniffing and/or circling behavior before they go potty. Some may bark or whine to let you know they need to go out, but do NOT expect your puppy will do this automatically. Consider training your puppy to ring a bell at the door for potty time. This can be done anytime after 12 weeks of age and often can save you many

accidents!

The Crate

The best crates to train your puppy in are those that have enough room for your pup to fully stand and turn around in and no more. Ideally though they should be large enough to accommodate your dog at full size, but allow you to section off the cage to ensure your pup only has access to the space he or she needs as he or she grows. **The Midwest iCrate Single-Door Home Training and Travel Series** and **Midwest Life Stages crates** are perfect for this. They both come with an adjustable divider panel allowing you to easily adjust the length of the crate to suit your pup as he or she grows to their full adult size.

How Long Can Your Dog Be Left In The Crate?

The maximum time that you should schedule your puppy being inside the crate is as follows. At 8–10 weeks you want to get her used to being in the crate for up to 60 minutes during the day. Then up to 3 hours up to 14 weeks old, and then up to 4 hours for the following two weeks and finally up to 5 hours beyond 17 weeks old. So if you work a full time job, you must make sure somebody else will be around to ensure your dog gets ample time outside of his crate to eat, exercise and relieve herself.

After your pet is 12 months and becomes an adult dog, she can be crated for up to 8 hours, but this should not be a regular occurrence for her own well-being. So do ensure there is always someone to give your dog a break, so she is not crated for that long.

Congratulations. You are on your way with a well trained puppy that sleeps well all night.