



Feeding Information

How to Feed Your
Goldendoodle

www.cosmopolitandogs.com

How to increase food

I recommend use of the Body Condition Score chart to determine when to increase your puppy's food. Puppies can have voracious appetites and can act like they are starving. This is an evolutionary advantage to help ensure their survival by giving them a strong drive to seek out food as they develop. However, in the modern world we have very nutritious food that has dense calories and is readily

available—they don't have to work or fight anyone for it. This means that using their appetite isn't a good gauge of proper and healthy amount.

When your dog starts to feel like her body condition score is going down, it's time to increase food. Food increase can cause digestive upset, including gas or loose stool. So increase slower rather than faster (over 2-3 days), and if she has tummy upset, back off a little.

Most of my puppies go home eating three times a day. Many will naturally start to "back off" or not finish one of those meals at about 3-6 months of age. This is fine, and this is a good time to go down to 2 meals a day, just distribute the same amount you fed as 3 meals into 2 meals.



A similar thing can happen at about 8 months to a year when many puppies naturally go down to 1 meal. By the time your dog is a year old, unless there's a veterinary reason not to, it's best to bring your dog down to 1 meal a day. You can start this schedule as early as 8 months.

Please call your breeder if you have food/feeding questions.

How often to feed your dog

Until 16 lbs or 16 weeks (whichever comes last)	3x/day
6 months to maturity	2x/day
At maturity	1x/day

EXCEPTIONS:

Smaller dogs (under 10 lbs) are prone to hypoglycemia and may need to eat multiple times a day, even as adults. We typically don't breed small enough for this to be an issue, but it's important enough to mention anyway.

Larger dogs (usually over 75 lbs) can get something called gastric-dilation volvulus (GDV), commonly known as bloat. Larger meals can stop the GI system from functioning properly and your dog can swell up from gas and die as a result.

It used to be thought that elevating a dog's bowl will prevent bloat, but recent research has shown it can cause bloat. Regardless of size, **always feed your dog from a bowl on the floor, never from a raised bowl**. Dogs over 75 lbs or who eat 3 or more cups a day should eat two meals a day, not one. We no longer breed dogs this large, however, some of our puppy families have a larger dog in their household, so we like to mention this. Please feel free to consult us if you have a larger dog and would like additional feeding advice.

“Free” feeding

Free feeding is when you keep food down for your dog all the time. This can be a very unhealthy practice for some dogs. It encourages overeating in some dogs and undereating in others. It can contribute to bloat. In dogs not yet mature it can cause issues with bone growth and it can contribute to food aggression if there are other dogs (or even sometimes cats) in the house. I usually recommend against free feeding unless your veterinarian suggests it for a very specific reason.

Puppies who don't eat well

As puppies grow into dogs, they start to self-regulate their intake. Unless your dog is starting to have poor body condition (see the attached chart), eating less or even skipping meals is NOT a problem and you should NOT change food because of it.

If your dog doesn't eat a lot but maintains a healthy weight, do NOT change food! Changing brands often cause more problems than they fix, since many brands have great marketing but end up causing gas, loose stool, and other problems because their ingredient quality and manufacturing standards aren't where we like them to be (these are not things that you can see on a label, and we have done a lot of work finding good food for our puppies).

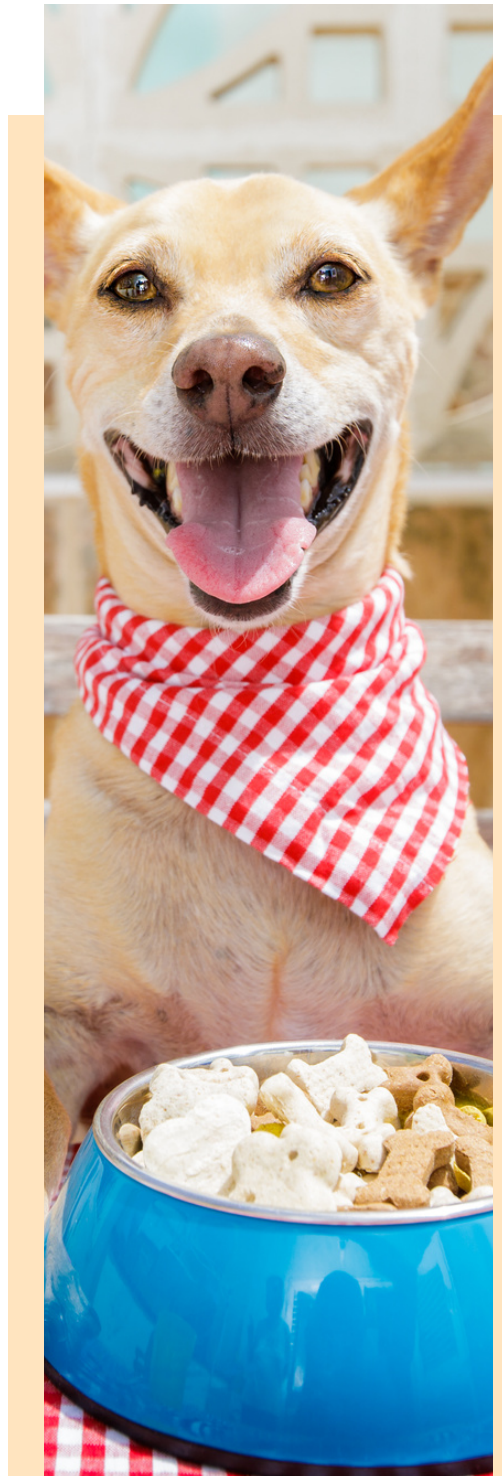
Older puppies and grown dogs typically require fewer meals than adults, so if your puppy starts skipping meals, it is probably time to eliminate one of their meals, not change food.

Picky eaters are often fed too frequently. Some dogs need time between meals to get hungry and build an appetite.

Call your breeder if you have a picky eater and we can help you determine if reduced eating is fine for your puppy or if you need to take action. Changing food is taking action, but it's usually not the right action to take, as it can result in tummy upset, gas, and diarrhea, all of which can make eating worse.

If you have a **genuinely picky eater**, there are things you can do without changing food:

- Add a little warm water to the food.
- Rotate flavors of food within the same brand.
- Try food toppers. Some dogs like the toppers sprinkled dry, others with a little warm water to make a "broth." Read the ingredients—many food toppers are junk food. A health topper should start with real meat and not contain fillers like wheat midlings, oats, or corn.
- Reduce the number of meals you feed to slow your puppy/dog to get hungry between meals.
- Add a little low-sodium chicken or beef broth to the kibble
- Add a little canned cat food to the kibble



Using the Body Condition Score Chart

Too much food isn't good for a dog, and puppies are very active and it can be hard to keep weight on sometimes.

The Body Condition Score chart was developed to give us a system of determining ideal body condition for a dog. Because Goldendoodles have a thick coat, the visual evaluation isn't useful to us—even a skinny Goldendoodle can look plump because of their coat.

To find your puppy's body condition score, you'll want to run your hands down her ribs. You want to feel the puppy's ribs with a thin layer of fat over them. Any more than a thin layer and your dog is starting to get too fat. If you can't feel your dog's ribs, then your dog is obese.

There are a few ways to describe how the ribs should feel. Here are the two that most people seem to relate to.

	Score (1-10 scale)	Description	Clothing analogy	Back of hand analogy	What to do
Thin	3 or less	You feel ribs with no covering	Feels like she's not "wearing" anything over her ribs	Feels like you are running your fingers over the knuckles of your other hand	Increase food, reduce activity temporarily if needed
Ideal	4-5	Ribs easy to feel with minimal covering	Feels like she is "wearing" a t-shirt or very thin fleece shirt over her ribs	Feels like running your fingers over the bones on the top of your hand	Keep doing what you are doing!
Overweight	6-7	Excess fat over ribs	Feels like she is "wearing" a sweater or fleece sweatshirt over her ribs		Reduce food, increase activity, contact us if you need help*
Obese	8-9	Can't feel ribs under the fat layer			Reduce food, contact us or your vet, this can lead to serious conditions*

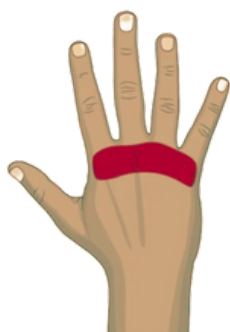
** Overfeeding can cause loose stool and obesity-related illnesses, including hip dysplasia.*



UNDERWEIGHT

**UNHEALTHY:
BCS=1, 2, or 3**

With your fist closed, run your fingers lightly over your knuckles. If you feel the same sensation when you run your fingers over your dog's ribs, then it's highly likely that the dog is underweight.



IDEAL WEIGHT

IDEAL: BCS=4 or 5

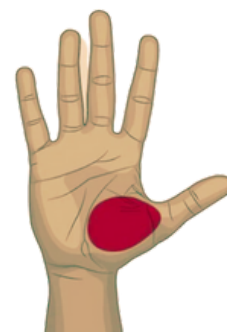
With your hand open flat and your palm facing down, run your fingers lightly over your knuckles. If you feel the same sensation when you run your fingers over your dog's ribs, then your dog's BCS is ideal. Keep up the good work!



OVERWEIGHT

**OVERWEIGHT:
BCS=6 or 7**

With your hand open flat and your palm facing up, run your fingers over the bones on your palm just below your fingers. If you feel the same sensation when you run your fingers over your dog's ribs, your dog is likely overweight.



OBESE

**OBESE:
BCS=8 or 9**

With your hand open flat and your palm facing up, run your fingers over the pad of your palm at the base of your thumb. If you feel the same sensation when you run your fingers over your dog's ribs, your dog is likely obese.

* When you run your fingers over your dog's ribs, focus on the ribs closer to the tail. The ribs near her head have a layer of muscles covering them and that will skew your results.

1-2



Very Thin

Very thin with ribs and hip bones prominent.

2-3



Underweight

Below ideal weight with ribs and waist visible

4-5



Ideal

Ideal condition, some fat cover but ribs are easy to feel

6-7



Overweight

Above ideal weight, ribs hard to feel, no obvious waist visible

8-9



Obese

Very overweight with rolls of fat and large abdomen



Food rotation

I cycle the food of my dogs and recommend that most families do the same for puppies over 12 weeks of age, providing there's no veterinary reason not to. Food rotation provides them with variety, which is important not just for appetite, but for health. Just like with humans, a varied diet is healthy for dogs. It keeps them interested in their food. It enhances the diversity of their microbiome. It reduces the risk of allergies and food intolerances, as well as helping to avoid potential issues, such as the nutritionally associated dilated cardiomyopathy that has been in pet health news recently. When you rotate, be sure to stay within the same brand to avoid digestive problems. More information is available on my website:

<https://www.cosmopolitandogs.com/post/food-rotation>

Adding fresh food

Fresh food is good for everyone including your dog! You can feed a little every day or have a special fresh meal one day over the weekend.

I do not recommend feeding more than 10% of your dog's weekly ration as fresh food. While fresh foods are incredibly healthy for your dog, and all-fresh diet takes care and expertise to construct and maintain I we wouldn't want you to risk the real possibility of inadvertently causing a nutritional deficiency.

Meat

I suggest that at least once a week you give your dog an egg or some chicken breast.

- Eggs. Whole eggs can be fed cooked any way, such as scrambled or microwaved. Your dog can be fed raw egg yolks but NOT raw egg whites. Egg whites should be cooked. Egg whites contain a protein called avidin, which can bind to biotin and over time cause a nutritional deficiency.
- Chicken. Chicken can be fed raw or cooked. Safe handling and good quality meat is always recommended.
- Chicken bones can be fed IF RAW. Do NOT feed cooked chicken bones. While anything that goes in your dog's mouth can potentially be a choking hazard, cooked chicken bones splinter and are a greater hazard than we recommend risking. Some dogs will eat meat very quickly. If yours is one of these, feed the meat to them while still frozen. This will cause them to eat it much more slowly and chew more.
- Beef and pork are also good meats. However, avoid sausages.
- Organ meat is healthy in small quantities, never more than 10% of your dog's caloric intake



Veggies

I also suggest you share some fresh fruits and vegetables with your dog. Dogs love fruits and veggies that are frozen, frozen carrots in particular are a favorite of puppies that are teething. Some foods are toxic to dogs, so when in doubt, don't give it to them or call your vet for advice. Berries in particular are healthy for your dog. Five or 6 berries a day are a great addition.

Start slowly because some of these can cause gas or loose stool! When in doubt, check it out* or just don't feed it. **Avoid pits, seeds, and rinds.**

Yes			Moderate amounts ok	No*	
Bananas	Cranberries	Peas	Avocado	Asparagus	Salty foods
Blueberries	Cucumbers	Pineapple	Mushrooms	Cherries	Bacon
Broccoli	Green beans	Raspberries	Tomatoes	Grapes	Candy
Brussels sprouts	Mango	Strawberries	Dairy	Onions	
Cantaloupe	Oranges	Spinach		Chocolate	
Carrots	Peaches (NO pits)			Coffee	
Celery	Pears			Alcohol	

**for a complete list of what not to feed a dog, please consult your vet or animal poison control (888) 426-4435, <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>*

THANK YOU!

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