

Puppy foods - are they necessary  
By Linda Arndt

The issue of knowing whether or not to feed a “Puppy Food,” is one of confusion and controversy. The textbooks, dog food companies and veterinarians tell us, you must feed a puppy food for proper growth. Yet breeders tell puppy buyers not to use a Puppy food based on their years of experience with uneven growth patterns and bone diseases due to feeding a high plane of nutrition (28% protein 18% fat). Based on my own feed trials and working with hundreds of breeders over the past 30 years, I have found a suitable solution for feeding the large/giant breed dogs, which is more in tune to their metabolism and the evolution of the large/giant breeds.

In the wild, nursing puppies normally get a high level of nutrition, which means a diet that is high in fat and high in protein because of the nutrient density of mother’s milk. Once a puppy is weaned from the mother (6-8 weeks), the puppy should not consume a high fat or high protein diet. Since they are too young to hunt on their own and they rely on the mother’s resources for food, the puppies would start getting less nutrition, or moderate caloric intake during the major growth stages. It would not be until the puppies are old enough to hunt on their own that they would consume a higher level of nutrition. So in the growth stages between weaning and young adult, a puppy would receive the “leftovers” from mom or the pack. This would involve regurgitated food (meat/bone/predigested vegetation, feces, etc.) from the killed prey, particularly the bones.

The drastic growth stages from 8 weeks—6 months, are a fragile developmental stage and puppies are prone to growth diseases such as HOD (Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy ) and OCD (Osteochondritis Dessicans).

This means the large and giant breeds generally do better in their growth and development when fed an Adult Formula food because they are moderate in their calories/protein/fat. However, not all Adult formulas are acceptable, because they do not have enough nutrition (vitamins/minerals/amino acids) present for proper growth. In fact, very few adult formulas are appropriate for growth.

I believe using a high calorie/protein/fat diet goes against what nature intended, which is for them to grow slow and even, so their muscles and bone developed at the same rate, lending support to joints. Because of this, I do not use “puppy foods” on my puppies past 6-8 weeks of age. By switching to a moderate protein/fat/calorie food with the highest quality vitamin/minerals/amino acids, we can mimic what would happen in the wild in terms of growth patterns, which in turn builds a stronger foundation for the animals structure and eliminates developmental orthopedic diseases or DOD.

\*\*Outrageous Shadow Filas does not endorse most puppy foods as an appropriate diet for the Fila Brasileiro puppy. Eagle Pack does provide a Large / Giant breed puppy food that is appropriate for the Fila when fed for the first 10 months of life.