

How much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy

Figuring out [how much to feed a Golden Retriever Puppy](#) isn't an easy business. In fact, adding to the complexity, it's not just an issue of how much food, but what kind and when.

Not only this, but as your puppy matures, the answer to this question of [how much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy](#) is going to change! Maybe several times throughout their journey to maturity.

In this Golden Retriever Puppy Feeding guide, we'll walk you the three steps in finding the optimal diet: 1) knowing the various diet options 2) focusing on moderation and preventive health and 3) paying close attention to your puppy and how it's faring with its diet.

Getting the quantity right

So let's begin with the broadest and simplest question, of [how much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy](#).

The key here is that you should avoid overfeeding at all costs. [Research suggests](#) that as a general rule, we humans aren't very good at doing this. Obesity is a growing epidemic among all canines.

Not only can overfeeding cause obesity, it can also [rapid bone growth](#) which can cause serious bone and joint abnormalities that may be an issue for the rest of your puppy's life.

So, when it comes to [how much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy](#), there's one simple rule of thumb: start out as you intend to continue. Be strict!

Are treats OK? Yes, they are. But it's important you think of them as just that—the occasional treat to brighten your puppy's day.

[Here's a great chart](#) to guide the kinds of quantities of food you should be aiming for.

Composition

The issue of composition is another factor to consider. While there's some debate on the quantities, generally speaking, a healthy puppy will benefit from a diet that is high in both protein and healthy fats.

Both fat and protein are needed to promote healthy growth, and puppies have a lot of growing to do!

For more information on the ideal composition of your Golden Retriever puppy's food, [click here](#).

Pros and cons of different foods

Kibble

Kibble is one of the most common dog foods, but how good they are varies significantly across brands. It's therefore important to do your research. The [Dog Food Advisor website](#) is a great place to start.

Orijen and Nature's Variety are two great brands to look at. They avoid corn and wheat, which is [generally considered](#) a poor additive for dogs, opting instead for lentils to provide fibre.

The big advantage of kibble, of course, is that it's available everywhere. It also stores well and (provided you get the right brand) is a great way to guarantee your puppy is getting all the nutrients it needs.

A disadvantage of kibble is that it's dry. This means you'll need to make sure your puppy is getting enough water.

Standard Tinned Wet Food

Again, there's a huge range of quality levels in tinned wet food. The Dog Food Advisor website will be your friend in researching suitable brands.

While they are convenient and provide a higher water content than kibble, [research suggests](#) that Labradors tend to respond less favorably to tinned wet foods than other large dogs. It will be important to watch your puppy closely to be sure they can tolerate it.

Raw Foods

When it comes to raw foods, [how much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy](#) is a big topic. For a detailed guide on raw food for Labradors, check out our Raw Feeding Guide, [here](#).

Broadly speaking, the advantage of a raw food diet is that it's providing food in a form that suits a canine's natural state of chasing, catching and killing prey. Raw food replicates the kind of food a canine would eat in a completely natural state.

The disadvantage of a raw food diet is that it's a bit like being a vegetarian as a human. It's possible to do it healthily but it requires more effort and attention to detail.

If you're considering a raw food diet it's a really good idea to grab a quality guide. [This book](#) is a great option.

Behavioral issues

How much to feed a Golden Retriever puppy isn't just decided by dietary issues. It's also important to take some behavioral issues into account, dealing with them appropriately.

Guarding behavior

Some puppies struggle with eating in front of humans and other animals. They may be afraid their food will be taken away, leading to aggressive behavior such as nipping and growling.

When this occurs, the most important thing is to avoid punishing. Instead, focus on helping your puppy feel relaxed. One useful tip is to add food while they're eating.

If you're dealing with a growly eater, you might want to look at [our page](#) which focuses on this subject.

Bingeing

It's quite common for a puppy to struggle with moderating its food intake. This is an important issue to manage, because [the data tells us](#) that lifespans of diet restricted dogs are considerably longer.

If your puppy has a tendency to binge on food, it's important to only place small portions into the feed bowl at any time.

Begging

The reverse side of the coin of bingeing is begging. Once your puppy cottons on that you're the key to food happening, they may fall into a habit of constantly begging for food.

The key here is discipline. Be sure you set a feeding schedule and stick with it.

This schedule needs to work for you! Realize that if you set an expectation that breakfast time is 6am, you're like to have an anxious puppy on your hands very early in the morning.

Preventing obesity and other health conditions

Preventing obesity

Labradors [are predisposed](#) to obesity. Not only will obesity lower a pup's quality of life, it can also [shorten their lifespan](#).

Right from the beginning of your puppy's life, it's important to prevent obesity.

If you are finding your puppy's weight is creeping up, you may wish to move toward a higher protein and fiber diet. [Studies indicate](#) this is particularly effective in improving satiety and lower appetite in dogs.

Commercially available weight loss foods are also [demonstrably effective](#) in helping a dog lose weight without loss of quality of life.

Preventing hip dysplasia

[Hip dysplasia](#) is a big problem in Golden Retrievers, especially among [male dogs](#).

This further reinforces the importance of keeping the weight off your insatiably hungry puppy. While no specific diet is proven superior to the others in preventing hip dysplasia, feeding a puppy as and when it wants has been correlated with weight gain and hip problems.

Allergies

While it is rare, your puppy may have an allergy to one or more ingredients. Common allergy offenders include chicken, beef, dairy egg and fish.

If you notice swelling, lethargy, rashes or drooling after eating, it's important to carefully remove dietary ingredients to isolate the cause of the problem. For any severe symptoms, you should immediately consult your vet

Here's [our complete guide](#) to dealing with your pup's food allergies.

There's no single answer to the question of [how much to feed a Golden Retriever Puppy](#). If you know your food options, focus on good preventive health and pay close attention to how your puppy is doing, there's a good chance you'll have a lean, healthy friend for years to come.

We hope this guide is a good starting point to setting your puppy on a healthy path.

Sources

- [“A Veterinarian's Guide to Labrador Retriever Dogs,”](#) Veterinarians.com
- [Dog Food Advisor Website](#)
- Flanagan, J et al., 2017, “[Success of a weight loss plan for overweight dogs: The results of an international weight loss study,](#)” Plus One
- German, A et al., 2008, “[A high protein high fibre diet improves weight loss in obese dogs,](#)” The Veterinary Journal
- Kealy, R et al., 2002, “[Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs,](#)” Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association
- Larsen, J., 2010, “[Feeding large-breed puppies,](#)” Compendium of Continuing Education in Veterinary Science
- Lonsdale, T, 2005, “[Work Wonders: Feed Your Dog Raw Meaty Bones.](#)”
- Mankowska, M et al., 2017, “[Polymorphism and methylation of the MC4R gene in obese and non-obese dogs,](#)” Molecular Biology Reports
- Meyer, H et al., 2002, “[Digestibility and Compatibility of Mixed Diets and Faecal Consistency in Different Breeds of Dog,](#)” Wiley Online Library
- Morgan, JP et al., 1999, “[Bone dysplasias in the labrador retriever: a radiographic study,](#)” Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association
- Sallander, M et al., “[Diet, Exercise, and Weight as Risk Factors in Hip Dysplasia and Elbow Arthrosis in Labrador Retrievers,](#)” The WALTHAM International Nutritional Sciences Symposia
- Stowe, H et al., 2006, “[Antioxidant Status of Pair-Fed Labrador Retrievers Is Affected by Diet Restriction and Aging,](#)” The Journal of Nutrition

