



Medium Puppy 32

By Katie Hartley

There are many issues that need to be addressed by medium breed puppies' diets such as their growth rate, digestive tolerance, development of muscle and bones, and their fragile immune system. The puppies' ability to grow and develop into strong, healthy dogs is decided during their first year. It may seem that their only jobs during those first twelve months are to eat, sleep, and explore everything they possibly can, but their bodies are growing and developing and need the right nutrition to support this crucial time.

Medium breed puppies increase their birth weight by 40-60 times and they reach their adult weight at 12 months of age. This is very different from small and large breed dogs. Small breeds increase their birth weight 20-40 times in 8-10 months and large breeds increase 60-100 times in 18-24 months. These differences represent a need for different nutrition. During this growth phase it is imperative that the puppies eat the appropriate levels of phosphorus, calcium, and energy so that their bones and muscles grow at appropriate rates. Having too much or too little of these minerals can result in orthopedic disease.

Not only are they developing the muscles in their legs, but they are also developing their brain, which is made up of mainly of fat tissue. Studies have shown that the EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) & DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), omega 3 fatty acids found in anchovy oil, are beneficial in the brain development of puppies. Supplementing the diet with EPA and DHA will improve brain function and can help them learn more quickly and train more easily. EPA and DHA are also very beneficial to neurological development, especially of the retina. Their retinas begin developing while they are still inside their mother and continue the first few weeks after they are born while they are nursing. It is therefore important to supplement both the mothers' and the puppies' diets with EPA and DHA to ensure that they have excellent vision.

During that time when their retinas are developing and they are nursing, they are receiving antibodies from their mother to help support their immune system. As the puppies start weaning onto puppy food and stop nursing from their mother, the antibodies they received in the colostrum start to drop. This is a very critical time known as the Immunity Gap. Puppies will typically start receiving vaccines at this point, but the antibody levels they received from their mothers are still high enough to interfere with the vaccinations. During this time the puppies are at danger of developing many harmful and contagious diseases. Because of this, Royal Canin has added MOS (mannan oligosaccharides) and antioxidants such as vitamin E & C, lutein, and taurine, which have been shown to decrease the Immunity Gap and strengthen the effectiveness of the vaccinations. Additionally, they have been shown to boost the puppies' own immune system.

These antioxidants in combination with FOS (fructooligosaccharides) and MOS have a very positive effect on growing puppies' gastrointestinal tracts. FOS is a prebiotic found in fermentable fibers that nourish the cells that line the small intestine. It also reduces the production of "bad" bacteria, thereby improving digestion and nutrient absorption. The MOS aids in digestion by attaching to "bad" bacteria and preventing adherence to the intestinal wall. Not only that, but it strengthens the immune system which will further assist the intestinal tract in fighting off "bad" bacteria.

Outwardly, the first twelve months of medium breed puppies' lives are filled with fun and discovery. Internally, there is much more happening. In order for puppies to enjoy themselves and make the most of their first year, they need to be healthy and have everything they need nutritionally to meet their growth potential. Royal Canin understands the importance of providing a diet that ensures digestive safety, optimal bone and neurological development, and support for the immune system. That is why they are proud to offer the Medium Puppy 32.

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