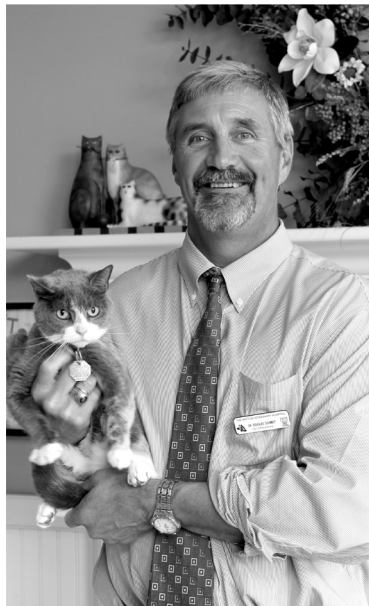


# ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



## *Why Should I Feed My Newfoundland a Large Breed Puppy Formula?*

There are so many pet food diets on the market today, things can get a little confusing. If you own a large or giant breed dog such as a Retriever, Great Dane, St. Bernard, etc., should you really feed a large breed puppy formula, or is a regular puppy food or a food labeled for all life stages okay?

Large breed puppy foods really are best for large or giant breed dogs. The reason is that they contain a lower amount of calcium than regular puppy foods and they are also less calorie dense than most other puppy foods. This is important because we do not want the skeleton of a large breed puppy to grow too quickly as rapid bone growth can contribute to orthopedic problems like osteoarthritis, hip dysplasia, panosteitis, and other bone diseases.

Large breed puppy food should be fed until the pup reaches at least 80% of his or her adult size or until the puppy is approximately twelve to eighteen months old. Contrary to popular belief, the amount of protein is less important than the amount of calcium, fat and overall calorie content of the food. It is also very important to feed the best food one can afford and to make sure the food has been tested by AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) to assure quality. A large breed puppy food should contain about 1% calcium, 15% fat and approximately 350 kilocalories per cup.

Regardless of which food you choose, the most important thing is to feed for lean body weight. Take care not to over feed your pet. Your dog should appear lean with a waistline and abdominal "tuck" and you should be able to feel his or her ribs readily. Padding over the ribcage or a sagging belly can be signs of obesity. Overweight dogs typically have more health problems and live on average about two years less than their thinner counterparts. Avoid excessive treats and offer meals instead of free choice food to control the amount of food your dog gets. Following these guidelines should keep your large breed dog happy and healthy for a long time!



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VETERINARY  
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**Dr. Douglas Schmidt**  
**246-3611**

[www.pattonvethospital.com](http://www.pattonvethospital.com)