

How Much to Feed Your Golden Retriever

Most American dogs are overweight and most American large breed puppies are growing too fast, subjecting them to skeletal and joint problems, some of which may not actually show up until later in life. A puppy that is overfed will grow too fast before they grow too fat. If you have a puppy that doesn't have especially large parents and he/she is growing into what you think is going to be a large dog, consider that you may be feeding your puppy too much (even if your puppy is not fat). The growth of your puppy needs to be controlled.

You don't want to underfeed your dog either. You should be able to lightly feel your dog's ribs. A dog shouldn't be so thin that you can see his/her ribs, even when your dog is wet.

Here are some general guidelines on how much to feed puppies. Most dog food bags suggest feeding too much. It is in the best interest of dog food manufacturers to sell more food. I send our 7-8 week old puppies home eating about 1/3 to 1/2 cup of food 3 times a day. As long as you cannot see the ribs on your puppy, he/she is not too thin. When Golden Retrievers reach about 6-7 months, they are supposed to look lanky and all Golden Retrievers act like they are starving when fed the correct amount. If left to eat as much as they want, they will all grow too fast. In the wild, dogs do not have unlimited access to eat as much as they want. They work for their food.

When puppies reach about 12-14 months, their caloric needs begin to decrease. Our full-grown females eat about 2 1/2 to 3 cups a day when not pregnant. Our male eats about 3 cups a day. Some males might need 4 cups if active and are fed a less expensive food. Make sure you take into consideration the number of extra calories being fed as treats.

Monitor a dog's weight during their entire life by lightly feeling their ribs about once a month. You should be able to feel their ribs, but not see them (even when the dog is wet). If you can see them, increase their food. If you can't feel them at all, decrease it. If your dog is getting a lot of exercise, they'll need more food. I always tell people that it is better to underfeed than to overfeed, especially when feeding puppies.

Here is a chart of how our girls generally grow in weight:

2 Months - 10-15 pounds

3 Months - 17-22 pounds

4 Months - 23-30 pounds

5 Months - 30-38 pounds

6 Months - 38-46 pounds

12 Months - 50-55 pounds

18 Months - 52-62 pounds

2 Years - 55-65 pounds

Here is a chart of how our boys generally grow in weight:

2 Months - 12-16 pounds

3 Months - 18-23 pounds

4 Months - 24-32 pounds

5 Months - 33-41 pounds

6 Months - 41-49 pounds

12 Months - 55-62 pounds

18 Months - 65-75 pounds

2 Years - 70-80 pounds