

How to Tube Feed a Puppy

Two Methods: [Putting the Feeding Tube Together](#) [Feeding the Puppy](#)

If you are caring for a newborn or very young pup, you may need to know how to tube feed the puppy. This is especially common if the puppy is an orphan or if the mother had a C-section. While there are other forms of hand-feeding a puppy, this is widely considered the safest and most efficient way to do so.

Method
1

Putting the Feeding Tube Together

- 1 Gather your supplies.** You will need a 12 cc syringe, a soft rubber feeding tube, and a 16-inch urethral catheter with a diameter of 5 French (for small dogs) and 8 French (for large dogs). These are the items you will use to create your feeding tube device. You will also need puppy milk replacer that contains goats milk, like ESBILAC®.
 - You can also buy an already assembled feeding tube from your local veterinary office or pet store.
- 2 Weigh the puppy.** You will need to determine the puppy's weight so that you know how much milk replacer to give him. Place him on a scale to determine his weight. For every ounce of the puppy's weight, give him 1 cc or ml of the milk replacer.
- 3 Measure out the correct amount of milk into a microwaveable bowl.** Add one extra cc to be careful. You will want to heat the milk replacer up so that it is easier on the puppy's stomach. Place the milk into the microwave for three to five seconds so that it reaches a lukewarm temperature.
- 4 Use the syringe to suck up the milk replacer.** Draw the milk up until you have the measured amount of milk, plus one extra cc. The extra cc will be used to ensure that puppy doesn't get any air bubbles, which could cause bloating or gas pain.
 - Once the syringe has drawn up all of the milk replacer, press down gently until a tiny drop comes out of the syringe. Doing this will ensure that the syringe is working properly.
- 5 Attach the feeding tube to the syringe.** You will need to attach the end of the rubber feeding tube to the end of the syringe.
- 6 Measure out the length of the tube you will insert into the puppy's mouth.** To do this, place the tip of the rubber tube up against the side of the puppy's bottom, or last, rib, and run the tube from there to the tip of the pup's nose. Pinch the tube where it touches the puppy's nose and make a mark there with a permanent marker. ^[1]

Method
2

Feeding the Puppy

- 1 Place the puppy on a table.** You should cover the table in a towel in case there is any spillage. Let the puppy lie down on all fours, so that she is lying on her belly with her front legs outstretched and her back legs tucked up under her. Put a drop of the formula on the inside of your wrist to make sure that it is lukewarm and not too hot.
- 2 Grasp the puppy's head with your hand.** Hold the puppy's head firmly in between your index finger and thumb so that your fingers are located at the corners of the puppy's mouth. Tip the head slightly upward so that you can see what you are doing. Hold the end of the tube on the puppy's tongue and let her taste a drop of the milk. Doing this will help coat the esophagus and get her ready to eat. ^[2]
- 3 Insert the catheter slowly but efficiently.** You will not want to go too slowly or else the pup may gag. Guide the tube over the tongue and down into the back of the throat. You will know you are on the right

track when the puppy starts swallowing the tube. If she coughs or gags, remove the tube and try again.^[3]

4 Feed the tube into the puppy's mouth. Stop feeding the tube downward once the marked part of the tube reaches the pup's mouth. Check to make sure that the pup is not coughing, crying or gagging. If she is not, secure the tube by placing it between your index and middle fingers.^[4]

5 Feed the puppy. After securing the feeding tube, depress the plunger of the syringe and feed the puppy one cc or ml at a time. To know when to let the puppy rest between cc's, count to three seconds in your head while slowly depressing the plunger. After the three seconds, check to see if there is any milk coming out of the puppy's nose. If there is, withdraw the tube as this means that the puppy is choking. After you have checked, depress the syringe for three more seconds.

- Hold the syringe perpendicular to the puppy for the most efficient feeding method.

6 Remove the tube. Once all of the milk has been fed to the puppy, slowly remove the tube. To do this, gently pull it out while still holding the puppy's head. Once the tube has been removed, place your pinky in the puppy's mouth and let it suck on your finger for 5 to 10 seconds. Doing this ensures that the puppy will not throw up.

7 Help the puppy to defecate. If possible, bring the puppy to her mother. Her mother will lick the puppy's anus, which will help the puppy to defecate. If the puppy is an orphan newborn, use a wet washcloth or cotton ball to simulate the mother's licking. Doing this is very important, as defecating will help the puppy remove any waste dammed up in her intestines.

8 Check the puppy for gas or bloating. Do to this, lift the puppy and stroke her belly. If it is very firm, she has gas or bloating. If this is the case, you will need to burp the puppy. To do this, lift the puppy by placing your palm under her belly and lifting up. Stroke her back and rump to help her to burp.

9 Repeat this feeding process every two hours for the first five days. After the five days are up, feed the puppy every three hours.

Community Q&A

How do ensure I am not inserting the tube into the lungs? Does meeting the mark on the tube mean it's in the proper place?

wikiHow Contributor It's best to have a veterinarian teach you how to feed a puppy with this method. You'll be tube feeding a lot, so it's worthwhile to know how to do it properly, as you don't want to risk your puppy's life.

My puppy is two weeks old and weighs 10 oz - does the 1 cc per ounce still apply?

wikiHow Contributor It's 25-35 milliliters, per 3.5 ounces of body weight at two weeks. It's always better to give them a little less than too much.

Tips

- If you have an emergency situation in which you need to feed puppies, buying an assembled feeding tube will help speed up the process.
- While there are other feeding methods, this is the fastest and most reliable.

Warnings

- Never force a tube into a puppy's throat. If you are meeting resistance, it means that you are trying to get it into the windpipe, which could be fatal. Remove the tube and try again.
- If you are using the tube to feed another puppy, rinse all of the parts before you feed the next pup.

Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/breedingdogs/whelpingsavingpuppy.htm>
2. <http://www.pcoc.net/tube-feeding.htm>

3. <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/breedingdogs/whelpingsavingpuppy.htm>

4. <http://www.pcoc.net/tube-feeding.htm>