

# Growing Strong: Nutritional Foundations for Puppies and Kittens

Developed and reviewed by the members of the Standard Process Veterinary team

## Supporting Growth, Immunity, and Behavioral Health in Young Pets

Proper nutrition is crucial for the growth and development of puppies and kittens. Whole foods, which are minimally processed and retain their natural nutrients, play a significant role in ensuring that young pets receive the essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients they need to thrive.

### Growth and Development

Whole foods provide a balanced array of nutrients that support the rapid growth and development of puppies and kittens. These nutrients include high-quality proteins, healthy fats, and essential vitamins and minerals. For example, proteins from whole food sources like chicken, beef, and fish contribute to muscle growth and tissue repair.<sup>1</sup> Healthy fats, such as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, are vital for brain development and skin health.<sup>2</sup>

### Immune System Support

A diet rich in whole foods can strengthen the immune system of puppies and kittens. Whole foods contain antioxidants and other immune-supporting nutrients that are often lost in heavily processed foods. For instance, vitamins A, C, and E found in fruits and vegetables are known to enhance immune function.<sup>3</sup>

### Behavior and Mental Health

Adequate nutrition from whole foods also plays a crucial role in cognitive development, influencing behavior and mood in young pets. Nutrients like DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish, are essential for brain health and cognitive functioning like learning and memory.<sup>2</sup>

## Whole Food Examples

Including a variety of whole foods in the diet of puppies and kittens ensures they receive a wide range of nutrients. Common examples:

- **Proteins:** Chicken, beef, fish, and eggs support muscle growth and tissue repair.<sup>4</sup>

- **Vegetables:** Carrots, green beans, and spinach provide essential vitamins and minerals, as well as fiber for healthy digestion.<sup>3</sup>
- **Fruits:** Apples, blueberries, and pumpkin are rich in antioxidants and vitamins that boost the immune system and overall health.<sup>3</sup>
- **Healthy Fats:** Fish oil and chicken fat are sources of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, which are crucial for brain development and skin health.<sup>2</sup>

## Considerations for when to include whole food supplements:

1. **Nutrient Deficiencies:** Omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals that might be deficient in commercial pet foods can be supplemented to support overall health.<sup>1</sup>
2. **Growth and Development:** During periods of rapid growth, puppies and kittens may require additional nutrients to support their development. Whole food supplements can provide extra protein, calcium, and other essential nutrients needed for strong bones and muscles.
3. **Immune System Support:** Antioxidants and immune-supportive nutrients can help maintain a strong immune system, especially in young pets who are more susceptible to compromise.
4. **Digestive Health:** Probiotics and fiber can aid in digestion and prevent gastrointestinal issues. This is particularly important for puppies and kittens transitioning from mother's milk to solid food.
5. **Skin and Coat Health:** Balanced omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids can improve skin health and promote a shiny coat.<sup>5</sup>
6. **Behavior and Cognitive Function:** DHA, found in fish oil, is crucial for brain development and can support healthy cognitive function and behavior in young pets.<sup>2</sup>

# Adjunctive Supplement Support

## FEATURED PRODUCT



### Canine and Feline Whole Body Support

Suggested Use: **See product label for dosing by weight**

Support for daily maintenance of all body systems. Supplements made from whole foods, organ and tissue extracts, botanicals, and other ingredients, can fill nutrition gaps.

- Beneficial for any patient, especially growing animals, performance/working animals and senior animals



### Mushroom Complex

Suggested Use: **See product label for dosing by weight**

A potent whole-food source of beta glucans and colostrum providing ingredients clinically supported to promote immune health in cats and dogs.



### Canine and Feline Immune System Support

Suggested Use: **See product label for dosing by weight**

Supports animal's immune system function, healthy immune cells and tissues, endocrine health, and provides nutritional and biochemical support.



### VF Omega-3

Suggested Use: **See product label for dosing by weight**

A concentrated fish oil supplement for dogs and cats formulated to provide omega-3 fatty acids that support pets' critical body systems.

## A Multimodal Approach to Supporting Healthy Puppies and Kittens | In Office/Physical Exam

- Discuss the importance of feeding a balanced diet with the inclusion of fresh whole food-based supplementation
- Remind pet parents that obesity is preventable and discuss healthy weight for the breed
- Review breed specific predispositions and encourage a proactive approach with whole-food supplementation
- Support behavior and mental health by discussing appropriate socialization beginning at an early age
- Stress the veterinary + pet parent/family partnership for a stronger human animal bond

## REFERENCES

1. Paw Naturals Pet Foodie. (2024, September 24). Understanding the nutritional needs of puppies and Kittens: A comprehensive guide. Paw Naturals.
2. Kerby LVT, VTS (SAIM, Nutrition), V. L. (2022, May 25). Starting strong: Puppy and kitten nutrition. Today's Veterinary Nurse.
3. Perfectly Rawsome. (2022, July 28). Whole Foods that provide essential nutrients for Cats & Kittens.
4. Case, L. P., Daristotle, L., Hayek, M. G., & Raasch, M. F. (2011). Canine and Feline Nutrition: A Resource for Companion Animal Professionals (3rd ed.). Mosby Elsevier.
5. Turkell DVM, A. (2025, March 20). 6 best supplements for Puppies & Kittens. Prana Pets.



standardprocess.com

©2025 Standard Process Inc. All rights reserved. LN05622 07/25

For Vet Healthcare Professionals use only.

**Standard  
Process**  
VETERINARY FORMULAS™