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### Puppy Contract and Feeding Instructions

#### Puppy Feeding Instructions

I am currently feeding American Natural Premium dog food. My adults are on the original, green bag, formula and your puppy will be eating their Large Breed Puppy when they are ready to go home.

Puppies should be eating 1 cup 3x a day to start with some water in the kibble. Puppies are often so busy checking out their new surroundings they are too busy to eat their full ration in those first few days. Those of you with small children must resist the urge to have excited children around the puppy during feeding time, as this is very distracting to the puppy and counterproductive towards creating good eaters. I would start that first meal at  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup and see how much they finish. If they don't finish go down to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for the next meal and gradually work your way up to a cup. **DO NOT LEAVE FOOD DOWN FOR THEM**, and never hand feed kibble as you would training treats. Give them a reasonable amount of time to eat, about 10 minutes, and pick up and toss what they don't finish. The idea is to get them eating the second you put the bowl down and licking the bowl clean. They are Labradors which are known for having good appetites, and should be gobbling up their food within a few days. I usually feed my puppies in a crate to help them focus. Believe me if you take the food away, they will learn quickly to eat once you put the bowl down.

I also do not leave water down at all times for puppies as they do not self-regulate water intake and will often drink until they barf it up, or turn a full bowl into their private waterpark, and what goes in must come out. Offer a puppy as much as they want after meals with the exception of the last evening feeding where I try to empty them out so they have a chance to be good in their crates and let you know they have to go before they actually do. They should also be given water after exercise, and not be fed until after they cool down after playtime.

At around 4-5 months puppies should be gobbling up about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups 3x a day and can be switched to 2 feedings of between 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 cups per feeding depending on the calorie needs of the particular individual. Most males need 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 2 cups 2x a day as an adult, most bitches 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups 2x a day as an adult. You should be able to see a waist/indentation between the rib cage and hindquarters when you look down on them standing. If you don't drop them a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup each feeding.

Don't let your veterinarian talk you into underfeeding your puppy. These dogs were bred for substance. They are a lot heavier than they look. There are veterinarians out there that don't see a lot of well-bred Labradors and mistake bone for fat, and think you have to keep your puppy very lean to keep it from getting orthopedic problems. The genetics behind my puppies are sound and feeding a puppy properly will not cause it to have issues. Having said this keep in mind puppies can still have injuries from overdoing exercise at an early age when there is joint laxity to allow growth. You should not be running with your dog until it is 2 years old because running on concrete at an early age can damage growth plates. Walking /hiking is just fine as long as the terrain isn't too challenging for a puppy. Those of you with small children should never let them pick up the puppy and walk around with them. A fall from a child's arms can permanently damage growth plates in the elbows and create chronic lameness for the life of the dog. Kids should be instructed as to the seriousness of this and as I taught my kids when they were little, to sit and make a lap and I will put a puppy in it.

I always remain assessable to help answer any questions about training, feeding and general care as you have them. We will be filling out the paperwork and registering your puppies, both for the AKC, and their AVID microchips, when you pick them up to make sure it is done.

\*\*\*IF at any time you can no longer take care of your puppy for any reason, I retain the right to make all rehoming decisions and will take the puppy back to do so.

\*\*\*As per current health/growth studies I require that you wait a minimum of 18 months before spaying or neutering your puppies.

<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/new-study-neuter-risk-hip-dysplasia-dogs/>

Puppies sold as pets will be done on a limited registration basis only.

Please take the time to read and sign this letter. Enjoy your new babies and please remember I love seeing pictures of my puppies as they grow and don't be strangers!

Susan Leonard

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Sign

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Date