

# Stay Loyal Grain Free Feeding Guidelines

**5** Simple, Dramatic,  
Yet Overlooked  
Rules to Best  
Care for Your Dog



At *Stay Loyal*, we buck the trend. Why? Because the trend is driven by large commercial dog food companies that are profit-driven. Despite their claims, they do not put the welfare of your beloved pet above all else. We do.

The owners and originators of *Stay Loyal* together possess more than 35 years of experience—with all types of dogs. *Stay Loyal* is one of the few dog food companies whose owners have a background in dog breeding. That's why we invented *Stay Loyal*—we wanted a better, higher quality choice of food for our dogs.

Our clients want the same thing. So we eliminated the bad stuff, like corn, wheat, soy, and barley, which dogs can't digest anyway, upped the nutrition, like omega 3s and omega 6s, and included better quality, far more digestible protein sources to replace the meat by-products that typically comprise commercial dog foods.

You're about to discover that, because our perspective is founded on a true passion for dogs, we recommend a totally different approach to feeding your dog—one that benefits the dog, not just the dog food company.

Read on...

# How to Feed Your Dog for Optimal Health

There are five easy, elementary changes that will generate a huge improvement in your dog's health. These changes help boost the immune system, allowing your dog to live a longer, healthier, happier, problem-free life.

1. Feed Your Dog the Right Food
2. Supplement with Meaty Bones
3. Feed Your Dog Once a Day, after Exercising
4. Carefully Control Portions
5. Skip One Meal a Week

Bear in mind that these guidelines are primarily for adult dogs. Puppies need more frequent feeding (three times a day to start) during that initial big growth spurt, for example. (See *our Puppy Development Checklist at the end for more information on raising healthy puppies.*)

Let's take a closer look at each of these five simple yet essential steps to feeding your dog the right way.

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## 1. Feed Your Dog the Right Food

Well, you have just purchased *Stay Loyal Grain Free Formula* so you have that part in the bag, so to speak. With *Stay Loyal Grain Free*, you are well on your way to raising

a happy, healthy dog, because avoiding grains in your dog's diet is not just important—it's downright critical. So are nutrient ratios. However, just as we as humans need to focus on more than just what we put in our mouths to ensure good health and long life, we need to do the same for our beloved pets.

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## 2. Supplement with Meaty Bones

We here at *Stay Loyal* strongly recommend to our customers to feed raw meaty bones to their dog two to three times each week—the meatier and fattier, the better!

Bones like lamb shanks and brisket, chicken frames, necks and wings, and pork and beef bones are all good. They must be raw, not cooked, and fresh is best. (Dogs do have a certain tolerance for meat that is going off, as the acid in a healthy dog's gut is far more capable of killing bacteria than ours is, even in very rotten food, but it's important to ensure that your dog is in optimum health first, with good gut flora, before you get too casual about the level of freshness.)

Why does *Stay Loyal* recommend meaty bones? Two reasons. The first is that meaty bones are the best teeth-

cleaning dog product out there, and oral hygiene is crucial to your dog's health and longevity. Second, meaty

bones provide sufficient variety in your dog's diet to make sure feeding time is more interesting.

**Note:** It's best to supervise your dog when feeding them raw meaty bones as bones can get stuck if they gobble them down too quickly. It doesn't happen often, but it can happen. This is also why it's a good idea to avoid thin, insubstantial bones. Large bones like shanks and femurs are not easily swallowed in large chunks. The benefits of eating raw meaty bones far outweigh any risk!

**Warning:** NEVER feed your dog cooked bones, as they can splinter and cause internal injuries.

The dogs we breed look their best and healthiest when following this combination of *Stay Loyal Grain Free* and raw meaty bones, even better than when they previously received a completely raw diet.

Well, your dog is not a cow or sheep. We disagree with this, too, and we'll explain why.

If your dog were living in the wild, it would eat sporadically. It would hunt on an empty stomach. When it made a kill, it would eat. And then it would rest. A wild dog might not eat for days, even weeks. Now, we're not condoning not feeding your dog for days at a time, but because 70 per cent of a dog's immune system lies within its intestinal tract, feeding more than once a day can contribute to many immune-based problems in modern dogs. This is because feeding too often doesn't allow the intestinal tract sufficient time to work the way it is designed to work.

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### 3. Feed Your Dog Once a Day, after Exercising

Most dog food companies recommend feeding their product to dogs twice a day and assert that this is sufficient for a wholesome, holistic diet. We disagree.

Some owners let their dog graze throughout the day, thinking that a dog is better off with a steady supply of food to satisfy both the finicky and the perpetually hungry.

#### **A dog's body is designed to chase down a meal on an empty stomach, eat, and then rest.**

What we recommend is what works best with our dogs: Take your dog for a walk before feeding time, whatever that time is, whether it's

in the morning or the evening, and then give it time to recover from the walk, up to about half an hour, before you feed it. (Some breeds

are prone to bloat and require at least an hour of rest before eating. If you are unsure whether your dog is vulnerable, consult your vet.)

Why do we recommend exercise before eating? When a dog exercises on an empty stomach, it simulates going hunting. Certain hormones are released to help your dog run faster and give it greater stamina. Processes then begin in the intestines to prepare for the arrival of food in the body. These processes create extra acid and enzymes to help break down food.

If you exercise your dog before it eats, your dog will absorb more nutrients from its meal than if it has slept all day. When a dog eats, a percentage of its blood leaves the muscles in its extremities and goes to the walls of the stomach to better absorb nutrients and help the intestines digest the food. On an empty stomach, during exercise, a large percentage of the dog's blood floods the muscles, tissue, and organs to improve running performance. This enhances the ability to catch prey. (This is precisely why it's a bad idea to feed your dog and then take it for a walk immediately afterwards—the blood is focused on digestion and cannot feed the muscles sufficiently to withstand exercise.)

After feeding, allow your dog to rest, the longer the better. Walking

your dog in the evening when it's cool, giving them a short break, and then feeding them gives them all night to rest and digest their food, the way nature intended.

When you let your dog graze throughout the day and night, the intestines are denied their need to be empty in order that exercise can build the necessary acids and enzymes the dog's system needs and the dog is not given sufficient time to digest its food.

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#### 4. Carefully Control Portions

It's critical to keep your dog at a healthy weight if you want it to live a long and healthy life. That's only logical, right? Well, despite the fact that this is plain common sense, seven out of every ten dog owners overfeed their dogs.

What is also worrisome is how few veterinarians focus on this health issue. In an article by Dr Ken Tudor,<sup>1</sup> he states: "In 2012, over 180 million pets were seen by a veterinarian yet left the vet hospital without treatment for a major disease. They were not treated for their overweight or obese condition." He adds, "Both owners and veterinarians fail to recognize the seriousness of the condition."

It's a huge problem with an incredibly simple solution: *if your dog is overweight, feed it less.* Control those portions! Eating too

much isn't good for you, and it isn't good for your dog. According to Dr Tudor, "A study of Australian and American pet owners found that 70 percent underestimated their pet's fitness compared to professional assessment." That's seven out of every ten pet owners who get it wrong. Are you one of the 70 per cent getting it wrong?

### Lean Dogs Live Longer

Purina<sup>2</sup> completed a study<sup>3</sup> over fourteen years using Golden Retrievers, a breed known for its tendency towards obesity. It found that puppies and dogs maintained at an ideal body condition lived almost two years longer than littermates who weighed about 26 per cent more. That's the equivalent of your dog weighing, for example, 25 kilos instead of a more appropriate 20 kilos.

### Correct Portion Size Changes with Activity Level, Climate, and Age

Most people give their dog the same amount of food every day. *Wrong!*

The correct way to begin determining portion size is to assess your dog's condition. If, for example, you are feeding two cups a day and your dog is too lean, try increasing its portion to three cups for a week and then assess your dog's condition again. Assess its condition every week until it reaches the ideal weight. If, after

a month, you notice your dog is looking a little beefy, cut back slightly and keep assessing until it maintains an ideal weight. The correct portion size is the amount that keeps your dog at a lean healthy weight.

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## 5. Skip a Meal Each Week

Skipping the occasional meal may lower cholesterol levels in dogs. In a scientific study,<sup>4</sup> young adult female beagles were divided into two groups. The first group was fed once every 48 hours. The second group was fed the standard recommended twice-daily meal. Both groups received the same food in equivalent amounts over the 48-hour period.

Interestingly, a decrease in meal frequency did not influence body composition, glucose tolerance, or glucose utilisation. However, it did result in lower plasma cholesterol levels in adult dogs – by a considerable difference. Plasma cholesterol levels averaged  $235 \pm 13$  mg/100 ml plasma in dogs fed once per 48 hours versus  $299 \pm 18$  mg/100 ml plasma in dogs fed four separate meals during that same 48 hours.

Fasting gives a dog's digestive system a rest. Plus, it allows the stomach time to build up the necessary extra acids and enzymes it needs to digest its next meal. Dogs are primarily carnivorous and their short intestinal tract is designed

to go without food for days, even weeks. Another thing: dogs don't experience the kinds of hunger pains and light-headedness we humans do, because their bodies are designed to eat sporadically and run on fats, not carbohydrates. Dogs thrive on routine and are habit-based. Those given a routine of skipping a feed once per week will eventually catch on and stop harassing you for food on that day.

Some claim it can be a challenge to manage a weight loss program for obese dogs. Dr Ken Tudor says, "Owners of weight loss patients often need on-site support, phone coaching, and hand-holding between hospital visits."

Honestly, it isn't that hard. A leaner dog enjoys easier movement, more energy, decreased inflammation, and less risk of disease and

premature death. Isn't that what you really want?

Simply scale back on portions until you reach the recommended portion for your dog at its ideal condition and your dog will reach that healthy, optimal condition. Be prepared: you may find you should be feeding less than half the amount you have been giving your dog up until now.

We love our dogs, and we love to spoil them - it makes us feel good. However, over-feeding your dog reduces their quality of life and ultimately cuts their lifespan. When they are overweight, their ability to move decreases and arthritis and joint problems become more severe because of the extra weight/stress on their joints.

Want to spoil your dog? Take them out for a run. They'll love you for it!

1. <http://www.petmd.com/blogs/thedailyvet/ken-tudor/2014/march/pet-obesity-underdiagnosed-and-undertreated-31463>.
2. <http://www.purinaveterinarydiets.com/getresource.axd?category=content&id=455>
3. Kealy, et al. "Effects of Diet Restriction on Life Span and Age-Related Changes in Dogs. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 1 May 2002, 220:1315-1320.
4. Romsos, Dale R., S. Belo Panfile, Werner G. Bergen and Gilbert A. Leveille. "Influence of Meal Frequency on Body Weight, Plasma Metabolites, and Glucose and Cholesterol Metabolism in the Dog," Depts. of Food Science & Human Nutrition and Animal Husbandry, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, <http://jn.nutrition.org/content/108/2/238.full.pdf>.

# A Hungry\* Dog Is a Healthy Dog!

Were we at *Stay Loyal* to follow other dog food manufacturers and recommend two meals a day, every day, yes, it would mean improved profits for us. We don't care. We're bucking the trend. We're more interested in keeping you as a customer for the longest life possible for your dog. We want your dog to be healthy and live a long active life.

The best way we know how to do that is to follow these feeding guidelines above and limit food intake. If you can't see your dog's waist from both the side and from above, you need to start feeding your dog less food now! If you can see (or feel, with a light touch, in long-haired breeds) one or two ribs, even better. A healthy dog is a lean dog with a shiny healthy coat.

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## Examples of Good and Not So Good Physical Condition in Dogs



This dog is in fine condition: waist tucked up, the outline of its ribcage showing, and good muscle tone in the shoulders and back legs.



This Labrador is considered to be in relatively good condition; however, we would caution that this represents the heaviest this dog should weigh in cold weather, under 20 degrees C. A dog at this weight could easily succumb to heat exhaustion running around too much at this size on a hot day.

## Feeding Guidelines

This dog is in perfect condition. During the summer months, it would feel better if it lost a kilo, but for winter and cooler climates, the body weight and condition shown here is perfect. Notice how you can see some but not all of its ribs. No spinal or hip bones are protruding. This dog is at its ideal, most comfortable, healthiest weight.



This dog is overweight. Any form of exertion will cause overheating and stress to its system. Cutting back on its food until it reaches its ideal, most comfortable and healthiest weight, would serve this dog well. Being this fat also increases his risk substantially for other diseases, including those listed on p. 10.



In order to determine the condition of dogs with longer coats, they must be manually checked. Feel for a small, tucked-up waist and run your hand down the back to check for spine and hip bones. Long hair can camouflage a too-skinny dog.



*"This is Mocara, aka Maggie moo moo. She has just passed her vet examination with flying colours. They are very happy with her overall condition and can't believe she is 5 years old. Great weight, great coat. They asked what her diet is. I told them Stay Loyal and some meaty bones."*

Raelene Gallagher, Avoca Beach, NSW



## Is Your Dog at Risk?

The following is a list of diseases and their various symptoms for which overweight dogs are at particularly high risk:

- Diabetes:** Exhaustion and weakness; increased thirst and frequent urination; leg cramps; itchiness; sores and boils that won't heal; blurred vision; pins and needles in the limbs; irritability. Can cause premature death.
- Cancer:** Pain, fever, fatigue, sores that don't heal; premature death.
- Liver Disease:** Nausea; vomiting; diarrhoea; loss of appetite; weight loss; fever; abdominal pain; anaemia; vomiting blood or excreting black (bloody) stools; confusion; drowsiness; premature death.
- Heat Exhaustion:** Confusion, dizziness, fainting, muscle cramps, nausea, rapid heartbeat. Rectal temperature rises to 40-43.3°C. The dog becomes progressively unsteady and passes bloody diarrhoea. Shock sets in and lips and mucous membranes turn grey, followed rapidly by collapse, seizures, coma, and death.

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### Summary

A quick summary of these health and feeding tips.

- Feed your dog a top-quality grain-free dog food like *Stay Loyal Grain Free* formula.
- Walk your dog on an empty stomach and feed only after your dog settles from the walk. Additionally, allow your dog time to rest after a meal, the longer the better. Feed fresh meaty bones two to three times per week, *Stay Loyal Grain Free* formula on other days.
- Assess your dog's weight visually to determine appropriate meal portion sizes and cut rations for dogs that are overweight.

Recheck regularly to ensure it's lean without being too lean.

- Have your dog skip a meal every week or two, to permit the intestinal tract to rest as needed.

Follow these tips and watch your dog's energy levels increase. Additionally, you'll see its coat begin to shine and its muscles bulge.

When your dog is lean and fit, you'll know that you're doing all you can do to ensure it's as healthy as possible and can live a longer, more disease-free life.

And isn't that what we dog owners want most of all?

# The Home Health Checklist for Dogs

Every day, when you look at your dog, you should do a quick mental health check on it. Can you detect any changes in its energy level? Is it more energetic, or is it flat and lethargic? Is one puppy noticeably less active than its littermates? What about the way your dog moves? Could it have a slight limp? It's particularly important to notice in an older dog whether it looks sore or uncomfortable when it moves.

Whether it's a puppy that has not yet been vaccinated or an adult dog, a noticeable drop in energy levels could signify something serious. Never procrastinate. Always take a dog that appears unusually listless to the vet right away.

In addition to doing a quick visual appraisal daily, it's a good idea to take the time once a month to review this basic checklist. (Note that gradual changes do come with age and are normal, but, when in doubt, check it out.)

**1. Body condition** - You should just be able to feel the ribs and no more. There should be a distinct waist between your dog's ribs and hips, and the belly should not sag. Watch

for signs of weight loss or gain. Adjust feeding as necessary.

- 2. Ears** - These should be clear of any thick brown or green wax and have no smell. Some long-eared breeds benefit from regular ear cleaning with special ear cleaners. Be careful what you use to clean the ears, as the skin in this area can be very sensitive. And don't clean too deeply or vigorously, as the eardrum can be easily perforated.
- 3. Eyes** - These should be bright and clear, with no signs of runniness, redness, or soreness. Your dog should not shy away from light as if it hurts their eyes. Eye problems can sometimes be accompanied by flu symptoms.
- 4. Nose** - There should be no crusting on the surface, runny discharges, or bleeding. Noses can change from black to pink and back again, something that can vary through the year. (The nose being cold or wet has no correlation to illness.)
- 5. Breath** - Bad breath is not just a cosmetic or social problem. Bad breath can indicate a

digestive problem or bad teeth, which could potentially lead to organ problems, if left untreated.

**6. Oral hygiene** – Teeth should be white with no excess tartar, which looks thick and brown. The gums should be pink or black, not red or swollen. Large meaty bones, twice a week, are ideal for cleaning teeth.

**7. Skin and coat** – Your dog's skin can be pink or black, depending on the pigments normally found in the breed. The coat should be healthy and shiny, with no broken hairs. The skin and coat should be free of any scruffy dandruff or sores. Hair may be shed all year round, particularly depending on the breed, but shedding is normally heavier in summer and autumn.

**8. Nails** – Should be smooth and either white or black. Nails that are roughened and break easily may require attention. When checking the nails, remember the dewclaws found on the inside of the leg just below the wrist. Some dogs have them on the front legs only; some have

them front and back; and some don't have any at all. These dew claws may need occasional trimming as well.

**9. Digestion** – Keep an eye on your dog's appetite for any noticeable changes. This can be very difficult to tell if the dog is new to you or a very fussy eater. (Often dogs that are overfed will appear to be fussy. Simple solution is to skip a few meals.) There should be no sickness or choking when eating. Stools should be firm and a normal colour, with no diarrhoea, constipation or mucus (clear jelly) passed (unless after a fasting day).

**10. Thirst** – If your dog suddenly becomes thirsty or starts drinking more than usual, consult your vet.

We at *Stay Loyal Grain Free* dog food cannot stress enough how important it is to be aware of your dog's health and happiness. They can't tell you when something's bothering them so it's your responsibility to make sure they're feeling alright.

When in doubt, never hesitate – always consult with your vet!

# Your Puppy's Development Checklist

Taking care of a puppy is considerably different than caring for an older dog that has finished growing. A little care and extra effort in the early months can ensure your puppy develops a nice temperament and doesn't suffer from issues like bone growth problems.

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## Growth

Puppies grow very rapidly. They can double in weight in the first two to four weeks then double again from four to eight weeks and yet again at the age of eight to sixteen weeks. With such quick growth comes the risk of several issues.

First, no matter what breed your puppy is or what food you give them, you need to be sure that

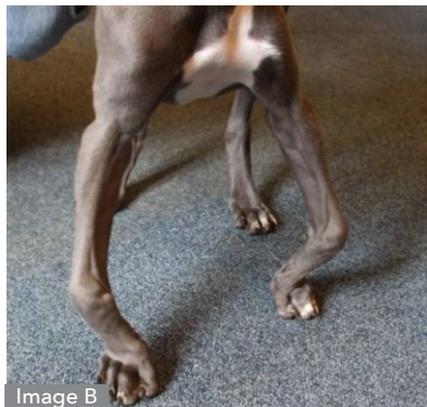
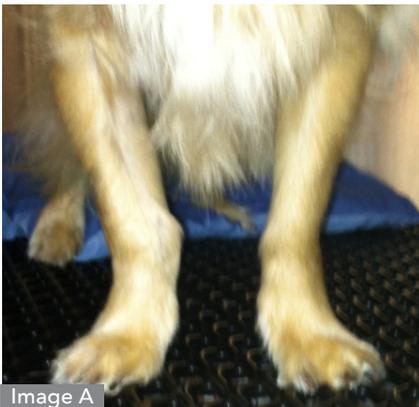
your puppy is growing correctly. Deformities can occur due to either too little or too much nutrition.

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### What to look out for:

- Is your puppy growing too quickly, putting on too much weight in a short period of time? (This can affect all dogs, but more so in larger breeds.)
- The puppy's front legs and/or feet are not growing straight. (See *image A*)

(This can affect all dogs, and is more related to breed and the quality of the breeding, but nutrition can also be a factor. Great Danes are a good example of how too much of the wrong food can cause deformed front legs (See *image B*). Some



breeds have crooked legs - it's up to you to research what is acceptable in the particular breed you adopt.)

You should have your dog checked before it gets to this stage. Look for slight variation away from straight.

- Overall good movement. (Because puppies grow so quickly, they can sometimes look awkward while running. But, if you notice your puppy limping, have it checked out immediately.)

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### What to avoid:

- Keep your puppy away from slippery surfaces, like tiles and polished floors. Slippery surfaces can put unnatural stress on growing hips and elbows. (The larger the breed, the more important this is.)
- Don't permit your puppy to run up and down stairs. (Again, more so for larger breeds.)
- Choose what you feed carefully, depending on your breed of dog. (Best to go with what your breeder recommends to feed. You still need to keep an eye on your pup's growth, as every dog is different.) *Stay Loyal Grain Free* formula is for all life stages so it is good for puppies, but you still need to keep an eye on your pup's growth because every pup grows differently.

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### Teeth

Puppies begin to teethe when they hit about fourteen weeks of age, where the adult teeth begin to emerge, pushing the puppy teeth out. Sometimes the puppy teeth don't want to come out. This can cause problems because it forces the adult teeth to grow in the wrong place. The only thing you can do is feed a lot of meaty bones during this period and have chew toys available. Worst-case scenario, you will need to go to the vet and have them remove the puppy teeth.

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### Temperament

This is the most influential time of your pup's life. This is where they explore and learn to cope with different situations. What you do during the first twelve months of your dog's life will affect its behaviour for the rest of its life.

Here are a few important milestones that we here at *Stay Loyal* have observed.

At about three weeks of age, puppies can go through a timidity/fear stage. If they don't get the appropriate attention from humans, they risk being timid and fearful for the rest of their lives. Most people buy puppies at eight weeks or older, and therefore will not have the opportunity to influence their puppy at this stage. If you choose to buy a timid puppy, it may be

possible that it didn't receive enough human contact at an earlier age and it may take some time to come out of its shell, if ever.

Eight to sixteen weeks of age is the best time for a puppy to bond with you and is the period you should be spending the most time with your pup. A dog can bond to you at any age with the right care and treatment, but nothing beats the strong bond that can naturally develop at this early stage.

Four to nine months of age is when they are at their most energetic and looking for discipline and direction in life. If you don't give it now, it will take considerably more time and effort to accomplish at a later age.

At nine to twelve months, some dogs experience a fear-filled period. If you find your dog becomes fearful at this stage, it's best to simply ignore the fearful behaviour. Don't try to console the dog, as it will think you are praising it for feeling afraid, and you could inadvertently be training the dog to feel scared all the time. Depending on the dog, this fear stage should end at age twelve to fourteen months.

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## Training

The age of eight weeks to twelve months is the optimum time to practice all the right training techniques. Essentially, do not

allow your pup to do anything that you don't want it doing when it's fully grown. They may be tiny and manageable now, however, depending on the breed, an adult dog can grow to over 60 kilograms and can easily overpower a grown man. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in this case!

Teaching them to walk on a lead at heel is very important when they're this young, as is teaching them to return to you immediately if they're off the lead when you call them. "Sit" and "stay" are useful when taught properly, and having them sit in order to receive their meal and waiting for your command to eat is best taught from a young age.

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## Big No-No's:

- Don't let them bite you, no matter how small they are. If you want to play biting games, use a tug toy or something other than your body.
- Don't let them jump on you or anyone else.
- Don't let them chase and bite kids.
- Don't let them steal food and get away with it.

It's a good idea to consult with a professional trainer if you do not have sufficient experience training a dog. It's a worthy investment that will pay dividends throughout the life of your dog.



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