

nutrition for the lactating dog



Croney Research Group

Lactation is the most nutritionally demanding life stage.



Nutrient requirements are higher than during pregnancy

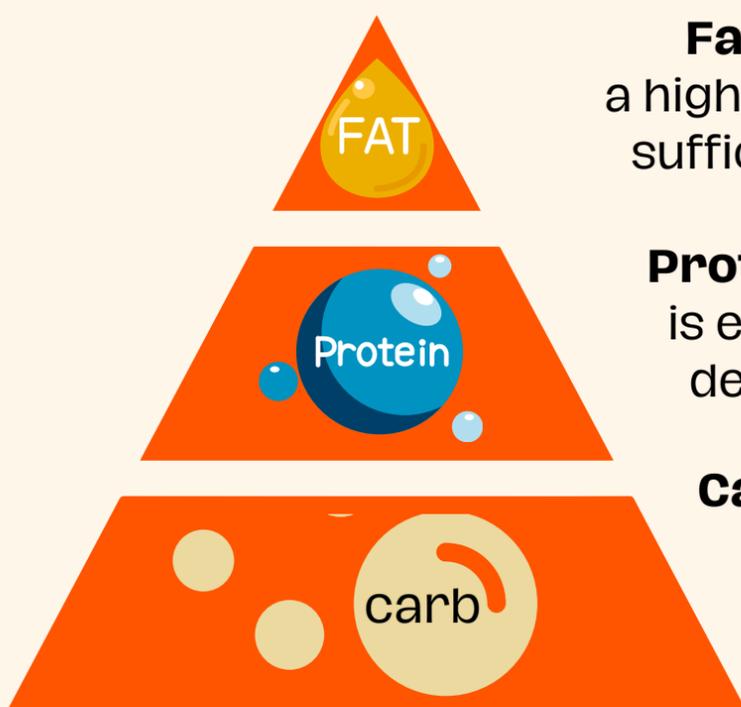
Calories and **water** are the two most important nutrients for the dam after whelping!



After whelping:

- Provide ample fresh water and food soaked with water to rebuild her energy and fluid levels
- Continue to feed a highly digestible, high energy puppy food throughout lactation
- Shortly after whelping she may have a decreased appetite

Provide clean water at all times



Fat (at least 17% dry matter)
a high fat diet is necessary to ensure sufficient caloric intake will be met

Protein (at least 29% dry matter)
is essential for puppy growth and development and health of dam

Carbohydrates should be highly digestible with dietary fiber comprising **<5% dry matter**

Smaller breeds tend to have greater per pound energy requirement than larger breeds

The larger the litter the greater the nutrient requirement to meet the demands of milk production

Nutritional needs during lactation:

Week 1 to 2: 2x maintenance

Week 3 to 4: 3x maintenance

Week 5 to 6: 2x maintenance

Note: large breed puppy food does not provide adequate nutrition during lactation or pregnancy.



Rule of thumb: at peak lactation increase the amount of food by 25% per puppy from maintenance level

Gradually reduce the dams' food intake as puppies transition from milk to solid food (starting around 4 weeks)