

My Puppy Won't Eat

You just brought home a new puppy. Or maybe you've had your puppy for a while now and everything is going well until you notice she isn't eating. A decreased appetite or complete loss of appetite in your puppy can be alarming for a pet owner, especially when you do not know the reason for the change.

Reasons For A Decreased Appetite Or Loss Of Appetite

Many different things can trigger appetite loss in your puppy:

- **Psychological Reasons, for example:**
 - **Fear**
 - **Stress or anxiety**
 - **Sudden changes in the routine or home environment**
 - **Distaste for the food**
- **Health or Medical Reasons, for example:**
 - **Too full from other foods (treats, human food)**
 - **Nausea and stomach upset**
 - **Side effects of medication**
 - **Ingested poison**
 - **Bowel obstruction**
 - **Pain while eating or swallowing**
 - **Other physical pain**
 - **Medical disease (kidney, liver, or heart disease, respiratory or infectious disease, etc.)**

Since loss of appetite can have many causes, you should observe your puppy and answer some key questions to help narrow down the reason and determine what to do next. The rest of this article will walk you through these questions.

Monitor Your Puppy To Narrow Down The Reason For Appetite Loss

Observe your puppy to help narrow down why she's not eating. Even if you're not able to figure out why she stopped eating and you need to visit the veterinarian, your observation provides important information you should share with the vet to guide their examination.

Remember, appetite loss can be caused by a health or medical issue, or, have a psychological reason. If your pet has not eaten after 24 hours though, you should bring her to vet for an exam. Answer the following questions to help determine if the issue is medical or psychological and whether your puppy needs veterinary care.

Is Your Puppy Drinking Water?

Offer your pup plenty of water if she's not eating. If your puppy is drinking water as usual but not eating the appetite loss can be due to nausea, an upset stomach, or pain they're having while eating (think dental problems or their food is difficult to chew). Nausea is side effect of certain medications so if check with your vet to find out if any of the medication she is on causes nausea.

If your puppy is [vomiting up water after she drinks](#), she could be experiencing a more severe nausea or a bowel obstruction and would need to see a vet.

Is Your Puppy Listless?

If your puppy seems low energy in addition to the appetite loss this could be related to a [medical issue](#). Your puppy may be stressed by something in their environment, or even have anxiety about being away from a family member. Try to rule out non-medical reasons for the listlessness and appetite loss before seeing a vet.

Is Your Puppy Eating Other Foods?

If your puppy is eating treats or human food, your dog may be filling up on those items instead of eating her regular meals. Cut back on treats and your leftovers to encourage her to eat her meals. Be very careful with feeding your puppy any human food as [certain foods can be toxic for dogs or cause health problems](#). If your puppy is eating treats or seems to prefer certain types of food (such as wet food) and refuse their regular meal, you could be dealing with a picky eater. Check out [this article](#) for how to deal with picky eating in your puppy.

Has Anything Changed In Your Puppy's Physical Environment Recently?

Changes in your puppy's environment or routine can cause stress and create a poor appetite. Things that would not bother a person could be very stressful and upsetting to your pet like new people or pets in the home (including visitors). Loud noises, sudden food changes, moving the location of your pup's food or bed, and many other seemingly minor things could trigger a stress response in your puppy. Returning to a routine or calming your pet in other ways should relieve her anxiety and return her appetite.

Final Thoughts

Many things could cause your puppy to stop eating or eat less. Appetite changes occasionally happen and may resolve on its own with little interference, especially if the reason is due to a temporary stress like a visitor or routine change. Health issues or a medical condition causing the loss of appetite should be checked with a veterinarian though. Monitoring your pup's behavior while she's not eating gives your vet helpful information they'll need when caring for your puppy.