

FREE BONUS GUIDE

The Berner Diet & Stress-Tummy Protocol

Happy tummies, calm minds and a lean, fit Bernedoodle.

Bonus guide for The Complete Bernedoodle Guide

Before We Begin

Many Doodle owners know the frustration: loose stools that come and go, an itchy dog who licks their paws, a picky eater one week and a food thief the next. Some Doodles seem to have more sensitive tummies and skin than other dogs.

This guide helps you feed your Doodle well, spot signs of sensitivity, work with your vet to find the cause, and keep your Doodle at a healthy weight.

> **This guide is general information, not veterinary advice.** Ongoing tummy upsets, weight loss, vomiting or itchy skin should always be checked by your vet.



Feeding the Basics

Choose a complete food

Look for "complete" on the label. That means the food contains everything your dog needs on its own.

Choose the right life stage and size

- Puppy food for puppies (large-breed puppy food for standard Doodles, as your vet advises).
- Adult food for adults.
- Senior food for older dogs, if your vet recommends it.

How much?

1. Start with the feeding guide on the packet, based on your Doodle's ideal weight.
2. Weigh meals with kitchen scales.
3. Take treats out of the daily amount.
4. Adjust based on your Doodle's body shape, with your vet's advice.



Feeding the Basics

How often?

- Puppies: three or four small meals a day at first, then fewer as your vet advises.
- Adults: two meals a day suits most Doodles.



Signs of a Sensitive Tummy

- loose or soft stools, often or on and off
- extra wind
- tummy gurgling
- vomiting
- eating grass more than usual
- going off food

Signs of sensitive skin

- licking or chewing paws
- scratching
- red skin, especially on the tummy, armpits or paws
- ear infections that keep coming back
- hot spots

These signs can have many causes, including food intolerances, environmental allergies (like pollen or dust mites), fleas, infections or other health problems. That's why your vet is the best place to start.



Working With Your Vet

Step 1: Keep a Diary

For two weeks, note what your Doodle eats (including treats and chews), their stools, scratching, and any other symptoms.

Step 2: Book a Check-Up

Take your diary to your vet. They may check for parasites, infections or other problems first.

Step 3: Elimination Diet (if advised)

If your vet suspects a food sensitivity, they may suggest an elimination diet: feeding only a special food for several weeks to see if symptoms improve. This must be strict: no treats, chews or table scraps other than those your vet allows.

Step 4: Follow the Plan

Elimination diets only work if everyone in the family follows them exactly.



Don't keep switching foods

Changing foods often can make tummy upsets worse and makes it harder to find out what's going on. Change only with a plan.



Changing Food Safely

Change food gradually over 7–10 days:

- **Days 1–2:** 25% new food, 75% old.
- **Days 3–5:** 50% new, 50% old.
- **Days 6–8:** 75% new, 25% old.
- **Days 9–10:** 100% new.

If your Doodle has a sensitive tummy, go even more slowly.



Treats & Chews

- **Count treats** as part of the daily food.
- **Keep it simple:** if your Doodle has a sensitive tummy, use part of their normal food as training treats.
- **Choose chews carefully:** some chews are rich and can upset tummies.
- **Introduce new treats one at a time,** so you'll know if one causes problems.

Danger foods

Never give chocolate, grapes, raisins, onions, garlic, xylitol, macadamia nuts, cooked bones or fatty scraps.



The Stress-Tummy Protocol

Bernedoodles are sensitive dogs, and stress often shows up in their tummy first. Stress can affect digestion. Some Doodles get loose stools after busy days, visits, travel or time in kennels.

- Keep routines predictable.
- Plan quiet days after busy ones.
- Use sniffing and lick mats to help your Doodle relax.
- Feed meals in a calm, quiet spot.
- Talk to your vet if stress-related tummy upsets happen often.



Bloat Awareness

Larger Bernedoodles have deep chests, like their Bernese parent, which puts them at higher risk of bloat (gastric dilatation-volvulus), a life-threatening emergency.

Signs

- a swollen, tight belly
- retching without bringing anything up
- drooling, restlessness, pacing
- signs of pain or distress

> **If you suspect bloat, go to a vet immediately.**

Reducing the risk

Your vet can advise you, but common recommendations include:

- two or more smaller meals a day
- a slow feeder for fast eaters
- calm mealtimes
- no hard exercise for an hour or so before and after meals

Keeping Your Doodle Lean

Check their shape

You should feel the ribs easily, see a waist from above, and see a tummy tuck from the side. With a fluffy coat, you'll need to feel, not just look.

The lean plan

1. Ask your vet for a target weight.
2. Weigh meals.
3. Count treats.
4. Use puzzle feeders and snuffle mats.
5. Add brain games and sniff walks.
6. Weigh monthly.



Keeping Your Doodle Lean

Water

Always provide fresh, clean water. Big changes in drinking can be a sign of a health problem; see your vet.



Reading the Poo

It's not glamorous, but your Doodle's poo tells you a lot about their tummy. Check it every day.

- **Ideal:** firm, log-shaped, easy to pick up, and a similar colour each day.
- **Soft but formed:** may be a sign of too much food, rich treats, or a recent change. Watch it.
- **Loose or runny:** keep a note. If it lasts more than a day or two, or your dog seems unwell, see your vet.
- **Hard and dry:** your dog may need more water. Talk to your vet if it continues.

> **See your vet straight away** for blood in the poo, black or tarry poo, diarrhoea with vomiting, a dog who seems unwell or won't eat, or diarrhoea in a young puppy.



Itchy Skin Home Care

Alongside your vet's advice, these everyday habits can help itchy Doodles:

- **Wipe paws** with a damp cloth after walks, to remove pollen and dirt.
- **Wash bedding weekly** in hot water.
- **Keep up with flea treatment** all year round.
- **Brush regularly** so air reaches the skin, and mats don't trap moisture.
- **Dry thoroughly** after baths, rain and swims.
- **Bathe only as advised** by your vet, with a gentle dog shampoo.
- **Check ears weekly.**



Feeding a Doodle Puppy

- **8–12 weeks:** usually four small meals a day.
- **3–6 months:** usually three meals a day.
- **6 months+:** usually two meals a day.

Follow your vet's advice for your puppy. Larger Doodles may need a large-breed puppy food, which helps support steady growth. Weigh your puppy regularly; steady growth is healthier than fast growth.



Feeding a Doodle Puppy

The Puzzle Feeding Week

Make every meal a little brain game:

- **Mon:** snuffle mat breakfast.
- **Tue:** scatter feed on the lawn.
- **Wed:** puzzle feeder.
- **Thu:** stuffed, frozen toy.
- **Fri:** "find it" hide-and-seek with kibble.
- **Sat:** training session using breakfast.
- **Sun:** lick mat with part of their wet food.

Slower eating, a busy brain, and a calmer Doodle.



10 Popular Questions Answered

1. Why does my Doodle have loose stools?
There are many possible causes. Keep a diary and see your vet.

2. Is grain-free better? Not necessarily. Talk to your vet before choosing a special diet.

3. My Doodle licks their paws constantly. It may be allergies or skin problems. See your vet.

4. How long does an elimination diet take? Usually several weeks. Your vet will guide you.

5. Can stress upset my Doodle's tummy? Yes. Calm routines help.



10 Popular Questions Answered

6. How many treats are OK? A small part of the daily diet.

7. My Doodle eats grass. Is that a problem? Occasional grass eating is common. If it's frequent or with vomiting, see your vet.

8. Should I add supplements? Ask your vet first.

9. My Doodle is a fussy eater. Stick to one food and set meal times. See your vet if they're losing weight.

10. How do I know if my fluffy Doodle is overweight? Feel for the ribs and waist under the coat.



CHECKLIST

Your Quick Checklist

- ☐ Complete food for the right life stage.
- ☐ Meals weighed.
- ☐ Treats counted.
- ☐ Symptom diary started.
- ☐ Vet check for ongoing problems.
- ☐ Food changes made slowly.
- ☐ Monthly weigh-ins.



A Final Word



A happy tummy and healthy skin make for a happier Doodle. With good food, calm routines and your vet's help, most sensitive Doodles can feel much better.

