

Why Don't Harrison's Nuggets Always Look Exactly the Same?



If you've noticed that your Harrison's nuggets sometimes look a little different from one bag to the next, you're not imagining things—and that's actually a sign of what makes Harrison's different.

Real Food Doesn't Always Look Perfect

Most extruded pet foods are manufactured using highly refined ingredients designed to create perfectly uniform pellets. Harrison's takes a different approach.

We use certified organic, whole-food intact ingredients that are minimally processed to preserve their natural nutritional value. Because these ingredients are grown by nature and not manufactured in a laboratory, there are natural variations in moisture content, density, and physical characteristics from harvest to harvest. These variations can result in slight differences in the size, shape, color, and texture of the finished nuggets from batch to batch.

Much like you would expect variation in fresh fruits, vegetables, natural variation is part of producing food made from real ingredients.

Why Harrison's Doesn't Make Puffy Pellets

Another important difference is our manufacturing process. Many extruded pet foods are designed to "puff" or expand during processing at high temperatures. Expansion creates a lighter product with a highly uniform appearance. Harrison's diets, however, are intentionally designed to be nutrient-dense rather than expanded.

Our ideal production temperature is approximately 195°F to 211°F, a range that supports food safety while preserving the dense texture and nutrient retention our diets are known for. The difference between expansion and non-expansion can be surprisingly small. At approximately 211°F, ingredients remain dense, while at 212°F (boiling point) and above, expansion begins to occur.

As food safety standards continue to evolve, newer manufacturing equipment often includes built-in safety controls that establish default operating temperatures at or above expansion points. These safety features are intended to protect consumers and their pets, but they can also result in slightly greater expansion during production than in the past.

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Typical Harrison's nugget size range



Puffy Adult Lifetime Fine

Why Don't Harrison's Nuggets Always Look Exactly the Same?



Typical Harrison's Coarse nugget

We continue to work closely with our manufacturing partners to keep Harrison's products as close as possible to our preferred specifications while complying with modern safety requirements. However, some variation is inevitable when producing minimally processed organic foods.

The Purpose Behind Our Coarse Diets

For customers feeding our Coarse formulas, the irregular appearance is especially intentional. Harrison's Coarse diets contain varying particle sizes that encourage normal gastrointestinal function, particularly in the ventriculus (gizzard). Birds evolved to process a range of particle sizes, and providing that variation helps support normal digestive physiology.

The very characteristics that create these nutritional benefits also make it difficult to produce a perfectly square, uniform nugget every time. Coarse ingredient pieces can reduce the nugget's structural integrity, making it more prone to breakage. Maintaining consistent shape typically requires highly refined ingredients and extensive processing—both of which run contrary to Harrison's nutritional philosophy.



Coarse nuggets, broken pieces and some powder

What Matters Most: Nutrition, Not Appearance.

The most important thing to remember is that these differences are cosmetic only.

Variations in nugget size, shape, texture, or appearance do not affect:

- ✓ Nutritional value
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Ingredient quality
- ✓ Digestibility
- ✓ Overall product performance

These natural variations are often evidence that your bird's food is made from real, organic ingredients rather than highly processed commodities.

At Harrison's Bird Foods, our priority has always been delivering superior nutrition not manufacturing perfectly identical nuggets. We believe birds benefit far more from wholesome, certified organic ingredients than from cosmetic uniformity.

Because when you start with real food, it's natural for every batch to be a little unique.