



WHAT IS RAW DOG FOOD?

A BREAKDOWN OF RAW
DOG FOOD FOR BEGINNERS.



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WHAT IS RAW DOG FOOD?



I think we all understand the core concept here - uncooked or raw food. However, it's more than just raw ingredients. It's the idea of feeding your pet the way their ancestors ate. The way that they are anatomically designed to eat.

Domesticated or not, dogs (and cats) are full of carnivore traits. From teeth to tail, they are built for digesting animal flesh and bone.

It's a common misunderstanding that raw food is just meat. That's a large part of it, but a raw dog food diet must contain all of their essential nutrients, so muscle meat, organs, bones, and even a little vegetation may be required to help them thrive.

You can't feed your dog a raw steak and call it a day; you have to ensure that the diet is nutritionally balanced. Incomplete or unbalanced diets can cause lifelong problems from deficiencies or malnutrition.

If you're considering transitioning your dog to a raw food diet, this e-Book will help you understand the benefits of doing so! Let's get started.



6 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD FEED YOUR DOG RAW



Feeding your dog a raw diet will positively affect many aspects of their health, but before you get started, it's important to understand how and why a raw food diet might be right for your dog.

01 Cut the Junk

Junk food, sugars, heavily processed ingredients, and the pollutants and chemicals that come hand-in-hand with mass-produced pet food are getting harder to avoid. Feeding raw lets you take back control of your dog's nutrition by cutting out the mystery ingredients and synthetic additives you'll find in kibbles or other heavily-processed diets and replacing them with highly digestible nutrients from fresh, real foods!

02 Fad Doesn't Mean False

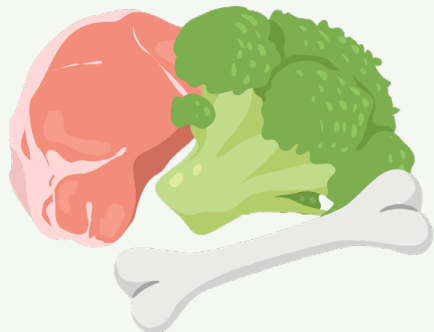
It's easy to get swept up in the fad diets that circulate the crazy world of pet food. While fad diets like keto, vegan or the ongoing battle with grains, may be right for you, they might not be appropriate for your pet. They have different dietary needs than you which can be met with a complete and balanced raw food diet – or a “biologically appropriate diet”.

We'll admit that biologically appropriate is a bit of a catchy term used to get your attention, but it refers to feeding your dog based on how their species should eat. In this case, like their wolf ancestors.

03 Dogs are Scavenging Carnivores

Even though dogs are technically classified as omnivores, meaning they can survive on both meat and/or plants, their history and bodies tell us that they're scavenging carnivores!

Scavenging carnivores can adapt to the nutrients around them! They roam for food and eat what is available. Dogs can survive on plant materials and minimal animal protein if they have to, but they will thrive on a meat-rich diet. A carnivorous, raw food diet can prevent common problems like diabetes, obesity and other life-threatening diseases.



04 Your Dog Eats Like a Carnivore

To help you better understand the benefits of feeding a raw diet to your dog, you need to know how your dog digests food. Here are some physical features that support the idea that dogs are carnivores by nature:



THEIR MOUTH

Digestion starts in your dog's mouth.

- Unlike omnivores, dogs lack the digestive enzyme Amylase in their saliva, which helps breakdown carbs! For this reason, dogs may not digest carbs-heavy foods as easily as an omnivore.
- Your dog's teeth fit together like scissors and are not meant for grinding like ours and omnivores! Their teeth are designed to tear and slice meat.
- Dogs don't have the instinct to chew their food thoroughly. Their teeth allow them to slice food into small enough pieces to swallow whole, like a carnivore!



THEIR STOMACH

- Your dog's stomach is more acidic than yours, allowing them to handle the bacteria found in raw meat.
- Dog's have a larger stomach cavity that is designed to hold food for longer than ours does.
- The acidic environment in their stomach breaks down food and edible bone into chyme, which reduces the bacteria to manageable levels and moves the food to the intestines for further breakdown, absorption, and excretion



05 Going Meat-Free Is Possible, But Not Always Recommended

It may seem contradictory to the message of this article, but the fact is - Yes! Dogs can survive on a vegetarian or vegan diet. The trick is that vegetarian diets are hard to balance and can lead to your dog lacking important nutrients over time if you don't know what you're doing.

A plant-based diet should be as natural as possible and contain the correct amounts of all the nutrients needed to stay healthy. This can be difficult because meat is the best source of many essential nutrients, like amino acids, omega fatty acids and protein! A lack of protein can lead to dogs being overweight and muscle loss that can affect joints and connective tissues.

If you do choose a vegetarian diet, consider supplementing your dog's food with fresh ingredients. Make the food as easy to digest as possible by offering natural sources of their required nutrients. Be sure to add some form of complete plant protein like quinoa, buckwheat or feed it supplementally.

06 It's Alive!

When we say that raw food is alive, we are talking about the meat's natural bacteria and enzymes. Cooked and heavily processed foods, like kibble or commercial raw foods that use high heat and high pressure pasteurization methods to eliminate harmful bacteria, are lacking in the helpful, live bacteria and enzymes that aid in digestion and absorbing nutrients. These "dead foods" provide less nutrition and are less easily recognized by your pet's body because the nutrients are not in their natural state.

10 BIG BENEFITS OF RAW



1. THE NOT-SO-SMELLY ADVANTAGE TO RAW FEEDING

If you own a dog, then you are familiar with the worst parts of dog ownership: the clean-up. A raw diet can reduce the volume and odour of your dog's stool to a more manageable and tolerable level.

Raw poops, as they are playfully called, resemble large rabbit poop. It will also improve the consistency and frequency of their bowel movements so you can plan your dog's routine around their bathroom needs!

2. BIOAVAILABILITY OF RAW INGREDIENTS

The bioavailability of a food refers to how digestible and usable the nutrients in a food are for your dog's body. When ingredients are exposed to high temperatures, like those involved in dog food manufacturing, nutrients are denatured, making them less biologically available. This means that they may yield less nutrition than before it was processed.

As scavenging carnivores with a digestive system that is intended to break down raw or minimally processed material, dogs can survive off dead food, but a biologically available raw diet will ensure that they thrive. When all ingredients are appropriately utilized, and your dog receives optimal nutrition, an increase in muscle mass and fat reduction can be seen, supporting a leaner and healthier physique.



3. MANAGING WEIGHT AND MUSCLE MASS THROUGH RAW FEEDING

Obesity is a huge problem worsened by inactive lifestyles, eating far too many treats or calories, and diets that aren't species-appropriate. A carb-heavy diet, like kibble, will lead to unused energy and calories, contributing to weight gain and poor muscle development.

Raw diets are calorie-dense and easy to digest, allowing you to feed smaller portions and provide better nutrition and energy to your dog. Feeding a meat-rich, raw diet will give your dog the ability to build and maintain muscle, burn fat, and provide more balanced energy to support an increase in physical activity.

4. BRING BACK YOUR DOG'S NATURAL LUSTER

Dry skin, excessive shedding, itchiness, and inflammation can all be caused by a lack of or improper balance of nutrients in your dog's diet. A raw diet provides the most natural sources of these essential nutrients in a form that is easy for your dog's body to recognize and use.

Another important factor in skin and coat health is hydration. Feeding a high moisture, raw diet promotes the natural oil production that supports the life cycle and quality of your dog's skin cells and fur. It also helps to improve digestion, keep them better hydrated, flush toxins and bacteria out of their system.

10 BIG BENEFITS OF RAW



5. MOISTURE AND RENAL FUNCTION

We all know that water is essential, but you may not realize that kibble and other dry diets can leave your dog dehydrated. Dehydration can decrease digestive function, slow the process of waste removal, and lead to recurring urinary tract problems like infection and crystals.

The high moisture content in raw animal protein helps the kidneys flush these toxins through the urinary tract. This support can also reduce unnecessary strain on the kidneys and prevent possible kidney diseases in their senior years. A moisture-rich diet, like raw, will also encourage more frequent and healthy urination, which will dilute urine and flush out bacteria.

6. MORE NATURAL EXCRETION

Cooked and processed dog foods require a preservative to make the food shelf-stable, but those preservatives do their job too well. They keep working right to the end, preserving the poop and slowing decomposition. Without preservatives, raw poop quickly decomposes, usually within a few days. This means less backyard clean up and healthier lawns!

7. NATURAL VS. SYNTHETIC

Synthetic vitamins are not always nutritionally equivalent or as biologically available as naturally sourced vitamins from raw ingredients. While some synthetic and natural vitamins' digest and are absorbed the same, others are more potent in their natural form.

Deficiencies caused by malabsorption of synthetic vitamins can lead to a damaging effect on cells and normal organ function, so most of the nutrients should be sourced from real foods.

8. DENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Enzymes in raw meat provide superior dental benefits compared to the abrasion from chewing kibble. These enzymes work by combating bacteria in the oral cavity that can cause dog breath, plaque and tartar build-up, inflammation of the gums, and other serious dental health issues.

This does not omit the need for regular teeth brushing and dental care, but it will prevent rapid bacteria build up in the mouth.



10 BIG BENEFITS OF RAW



9. IMPROVED METABOLIC EFFICIENCY

Higher bioavailability of food improves the efficiency of your dog's metabolism. When all ingredients are utilized properly, and the dog receives optimal nutrition, their metabolism aids in burning fatty deposits and increasing and maintaining muscle mass.

Increased energy levels and stamina can be seen even in overweight and senior dogs, and dogs with mobility issues, allowing for healthy exercise routines to be implemented.

The high fat and meat content also provides a long-lasting feeling of fullness. Reduced cravings can get rid of that hangry attitude that dogs can get. It also promotes better digestion and weight management.

10. MOUTH-WATERINGLY DELICIOUS

Even the pickiest pets love raw food. When faced with a choice between kibble and raw meat, there's no contest.

The texture, scent, and taste will have your dog excited about mealtime. Puppies, senior, fussy eaters, and even dogs missing a few teeth can enjoy this tasty food format. Healthy and consistent feeding practices can support all of the benefits above.



THE CONS



Raw diets look like the perfect diet choice on paper, but there are some inconveniences attached to feeding a raw dog food diet. Here are a few things that may have you questioning whether or not raw dog food is really worth it:



COST

Probably the most apparent barrier for pet owners that are hesitant about raw pet food is the price tag. When you are used to seeing the price of kibble diets from the grocery store, the raw food section at your local pet store might seem shocking.

Pro Tip

This sticker shock is a turn off for potential raw food feeders, but for many, the long term benefits of feeding raw do outweigh the short term cost. Improved overall health, as a result of raw feeding, will significantly reduce vet visits - other than routine check-ups - and can reduce the risk of serious health conditions later in life.



SAFETY

There is a lot of fear and confusion around the safety of feeding your pet raw meat. Safe food handling practices are required for raw feeding. Though bacteria on raw meat is unlikely to pose a threat to your dog, the real risk is to you.

Pro Tip

All raw pet food - and cooked pet food, for that matter - has the potential to host bacteria that can make you sick. Treat all raw food and treats as you would your own raw meat. Wash your hands, surfaces, dishes, and utensils that the food has touched.



PREPARATION

Another drawback to choosing to raw feed is the preparation. Unlike kibble that can be simply scooped, served, and forgotten, raw feeding takes a little more work.

Pro Tip

You need to be prepared to plan your dog's meals by portioning them and defrosting the correct amount of food from a single meal to up to 2-3 days worth of meals.





GET RAW READY!

With the right knowledge, choosing a raw diet should feel much less daunting. The results will help you provide the best life for your dog so that they can continue to bring joy to your home.

Give raw a chance. Your dog will thank you, and with the money you'll save on vet bills, so will your wallet. Best of all, your dog will live their absolute best and healthiest life.

To learn more about how to feed raw dog food and which raw food diets we recommend, check out the next e-books in this series: How to Feed Raw Dog Food and How to Choose Raw Dog Food.



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