



RAW FOOD 101

Many pet parents are turning to a raw meat and vegetable diet as a healthy, natural alternative to the more processed cooked foods that have become the standard canine and feline diets.

WHY SHOULD YOU FEED YOUR DOG OR CAT RAW FOOD?

At All The Best, we believe that animals thrive on a diet that mimics what Mother Nature would provide them in the wild. Although dogs and cats have been domesticated for thousands of years, it is only in the last sixty to seventy years that commercially processed dry and canned foods have become the standard.



Before that, our companion animals ate a diet composed largely of live prey and scavenged meals, along with scraps from their caretakers' diets—whole meats, fruits, vegetables and grains. This type of diet is still what our pets' bodies are designed to process, as it takes millions of years for significant

evolutionary changes in digestive processes to take place. Essentially, dogs, whether they are Chihuahuas or Huskies, are more than 99% identical to a wolf on the inside and our domestic cats are equally identical to wild cats!

What does this mean for our pets? Even the highest-quality dry and canned foods are nutritionally lacking, compared to a diet composed of raw meat and bones, fresh whole fruits and vegetables, and small amounts of whole grains and starches. Meals more closely approximating the diet of a wolf or wild cat help ensure that our pets are getting a species-appropriate diet that will support a long life in good health.

PRE-MADE RAW DIETS

- Easiest to prepare—simply thaw chubs, patties, or nuggets, and serve
- Complete and balanced with a full spectrum of vitamins, minerals and trace nutrients that meet the AAFCO minimum nutrient levels.
- Come in a wide variety of brands with many unique protein sources

- Organic options available
- Can be more expensive than home prepared
- We recommend **Instinct Raw, Small Batch, K9 and Feline Natural, Primal, Rad Cat, Vital Essentials, and Tucker's**

HOME-PREPARED RAW DIETS

- Can be made in bulk quantities for large or multiple pets
- Independently sourced ingredients can be more cost effective
- Complete control over what goes in—great for animals with allergies and special dietary needs
- May require multiple supplements such as kelp and fatty acids to reach optimum nutrient levels. We like **Nature's Logic Food Fortifier**
- Needs a calcium component to provide necessary support for strong bones
- Try our **ROAR, Primal or Small Batch chubs** for an easy base
- See our "Home Prepared Diets for Dogs & Cats" handout for recipes and tips

IS RAW FOOD RIGHT FOR MY PET?

No one diet is appropriate for every individual animal. Pets with depressed or compromised immune systems are often not good candidates for raw diets, as their bodies are not equipped to deal with the bacteria



Jet stays fueled with raw food

found in raw meats like healthy animals are. The most important thing, however, is feeling comfortable and confident in whatever you choose to feed your pet, raw or not. As with any pet food, make sure that the ingredients used are high quality and human grade, and aim for balanced nutrition and variety.

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COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT RAW

WHAT ABOUT BACTERIA LIKE E. COLI AND SALMONELLA?

Our pets' bodies are well-equipped to deal with bacteria that are harmful to humans, since their natural diet is teeming with bacteria. Their short digestive tract means that food moves through the body quickly, and their highly acidic stomach juices help neutralize any bacteria present. A healthy dog or cat with a normal immune system should have no problems regarding bacteria.

HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY PET'S STOOLS?

Pets that are fed a raw food diet consistently have smaller, firmer stools than those fed canned or dry food. Any excess bone matter in the diet is excreted out, often making waste appear whitish and chalky—this is completely normal. Occasionally there are some loose or odd colored stools during the transitioning process to raw. This can be a reaction to overfeeding or a too-quick change, or just a sign that toxins are being eliminated due to an improved diet. Such stool changes usually do not last long.

HOW DO I START FEEDING RAW?

Dogs are usually easy to transition to raw food. Start with small amounts either alone or mixed with food, and gradually increase the amount of raw while decreasing the amount of cooked. This can be done over a period of one to two weeks, taking more time if necessary for more sensitive animals.

Cats, especially older ones, can be trickier. The best way to switch them is to start by mixing a pea-sized amount of raw food into their favorite canned food and adding a splash of warm water to the mixture. Over the coming weeks, or even months, gradually increase the amount of raw until your cat has fully switched.

Books such as Dr. Ian Billinghurst's *Give Your Dog a Bone* and Kymythy Schultze's *Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats* can offer a wealth of information, as can raw feeder Internet groups and websites. Stop in your All The Best Pet Care store for tips, as most of us have personal experience with feeding raw.

HOW MUCH RAW FOOD DOES MY PET NEED?

Food quantities vary based on an animal's age, metabolism, and exercise level. A good general rule of thumb is usually 1.5–3% of an adult animal's ideal body weight, divided into two meals per day for cats, and two or three for dogs. The amount can vary based on metabolism, activity level, season, and age.

CAN I FEED BOTH RAW AND COOKED FOODS?

Absolutely! Many people feed a combination of raw and cooked foods for convenience and budgetary reasons. While canned and dry foods don't match the benefits of raw food, they offer a nice alternative for traveling and boarding, for maximizing your budget, or just for a change of pace. You may choose to mix raw with your pet's other food, or offer them at separate times. Be aware that some sensitive animals have a more difficult time digesting raw mixed with kibble, but do fine with raw mixed with canned—it all depends on the individual animal. Whether you go all raw, 50/50, or offer it just a few times per week, your pet will benefit.



Raw food makes Manji the picture of health



The Best Food, Treats & Toys for Dogs and Cats
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