

The Raw Food Diet for your Pet

To get you started, below are some basic guidelines and answers to frequently asked questions.

What is Barf?

Barf is an acronym for “biologically appropriate raw food” or “bones and raw food”. It is a natural and healthy diet alternative for your pet. The philosophy behind raw food for pets is that they evolved to eat this diet over thousands of years. Dogs and cats have short digestive systems which means that they are meant to digest food quickly. Cooked food takes much longer to digest versus raw food and raw foods contain vitamins and enzymes in their natural state making nutrients more available and easily absorbed by our pets.

Dogs and cats have pointed teeth for ripping and tearing animal matter. They do not have the chewing molars of a [herbivore](#) to break down the cellulose in grain materials; nor do they have the multiple stomachs or extended small intestines to absorb the nutrients. Therefore, a raw diet contains no grains, preservatives, fillers, dyes or rendered material.

A cat is an [obligate carnivore](#) and a true hunter. Whatever nutrition can be derived from a whole fresh raw carcass – in its entirety – constitutes a biologically appropriate diet.

A dog is a regular [carnivore](#), primarily a hunter but also an opportunistic scavenger. The diet for a dog can be based on a wider range of whole raw foods of both animal and plant origin. Both species rely on bones as a part of their diet for a variety of reasons including teeth cleaning and various other nutritional and psychological benefits.

A raw food diet will include such things as muscle meat, bone, fat, organ meat, limited amounts of vegetable materials and any other foods that will mimic what their wild ancestors ate. Modern dogs of any breed are not only capable of eating the food of their wild ancestors, but actually require it for maximum health. This is because their basic physiology hasn't changed despite obvious and dramatic changes in their outward appearance and behaviour.

The BARF diet must, from a practical point of view, use food that is readily available. Raw food feeders do not have to go hunting or send their dogs out to hunt. That is why BARF must only mimic, not duplicate, the evolutionary diet of dogs. This is an important distinction. The BARF feeder will “mimic” as closely as possible rather than duplicate the natural diet of the dog. We are not trying to return our dogs to the wild. It is impossible to feed any domestic animal its natural diet, let alone allow it to live under natural conditions. This is not what we want for our pets. What we want for our animals is a diet and an environment that maximizes health. That means a biologically appropriate diet rather than a diet provided by living in the wild.

Why feed a raw diet to your pets?

A raw diet promotes a boosted immune system which not only increases resistance to disease and parasites but also provides the following benefits:

- improved digestion
- cleaner teeth
- contributes to strong nails and clean ears
- contributes to a healthier skin and coat
- eliminates bad body odour & bad breath
- increased energy
- improved condition of coats
- better overall health

How to feed a raw diet?

DOGS:

A raw diet for your dog can include complete meals or a combination of raw meaty bones (eg. chicken necks and backs, turkey necks, etc.) and complete meals; or raw meaty bones and veggies.

The general guideline is to feed your active, healthy adult dog 3% of his/her optimum weight. Eg. 50lb dog would require approximately 1.5 pounds of food per day.

For a dog that is overweight or not quite as active, their daily requirement is reduced to 2 or 2.5% of their optimum weight.

It's important to learn the ideal weight of your dog and then be sure to weigh your pet often to make sure you are still feeding him/her the right amount of food.

Once you have an ideal weight concept in mind for your animal, feel the dog's ribs with both hands. Then take a look at him from above and from the side.

FOR AN IDEAL DOG: It is easy to feel the ribs without an excess fat coverage. Viewed from the side, the belly is tucked up defining the chest. Viewed from above, there's a noticeable waist in front of the hips.



FOR AN OVERWEIGHT DOG: It is difficult to feel the ribs because of excess fat coverage. Viewed from the side, the belly has minimal or no tuck. Viewed from above, there's no waist in front of the hips.



Dogs' Ideal Weight @ 2.5%	Pounds of raw per day	Kilograms of raw per day
5 lbs	1/8 lbs – 2oz	0.06 kg
10 lbs	1/4 lbs – 4oz	0.12 kg
15 lbs	1/3 lbs – 5.25oz	0.15 kg
20 lbs	1/2 lbs – 8oz	0.23 kg
30 lbs	3/4 lbs – 12oz	0.34 kg
40 lbs	1 lbs – 16oz	0.46 kg
50 lbs	1 1/4 lbs – 20oz	0.57 kg
60 lbs	1 1/2 lbs – 24oz	0.68 kg
70 lbs	1 3/4 lbs – 28oz	0.80 kg
80 lbs	2 lbs – 32oz	0.91 kg
90 lbs	2 1/4 lbs – 36oz	1.02 kg
110 lbs	2 3/4 lbs – 44oz	1.14 kg
130 lbs	3 1/4 lbs – 52oz	1.48 kg

Variety is also important. Eggs, organ meats, plain yogurt, cottage cheese and chicken and turkey necks or backs should also be included in your dog's diet throughout the week.

PUPPIES:

Growing puppies require 4 to 5% of their body weight. Weigh them every two weeks and adjust amounts accordingly. Split this 4 to 5% into 3 or 4 smaller meals daily.

At four to five months (for smaller breeds) and seven to eight months (for larger breeds), slowly taper off to 2 meals a day.

Once the puppy reaches 1 year old, gradually aim to feeding him/her 2.5 to 3% of their body weight.

CATS:

Cats are true carnivores. Their diet should consist mainly of meat, bones and organ meat, such as liver, heart and kidney.

Wings, backs, necks and/or whole carcasses can be fed to your cat, whether it's from chicken, turkey, duck or rabbit. Variety is important.

Adult cats should be fed 5 to 8% of their body weight daily, again depending on their activity level. Food should be divided into 2 or 3 meals.

KITTENS:

Growing kittens require more and should therefore be fed 8 to 10% of their body weight, split into 3 or 4 meals daily.

Your Questions Answered:

Recommended Supplements:

We recommend adding sea kelp and a good quality EFA oil such as a herring oil or cod liver oil to your pet's diet.

Sea Kelp is a source of iodine and 60 trace minerals. It is a rich source of vitamins, in particular the B vitamins.

A good quality oil such as herring will provide your pet with essential fatty acids which are beneficial for skin, coat, joints and overall immune health.

What about the bacteria in raw foods?

Our pets come into contact with bacteria on a daily basis. They are ingesting bacteria all the time, from their walks in the woods, their drinks in puddles and streams and when they groom themselves, yet they do not get sick.

The digestive systems of dogs and cats are much shorter and are designed to digest raw meaty bones and food. The hydrochloric acid in their stomach is five times as strong as ours.

For healthy pets, raw foods are not a problem.

Please refer to this link for more information on this topic.
“Salmonella – Facts for the Health of You and Your Pet.”

<http://www.mountaindogfood.com/RawHelp/library/Salmonella.pdf>

How do I make sure my family and I don't get sick from handling raw food?

You would do as you normally do when handling raw meat of any kind whether it's for yourself or your pet.

- 1) Store raw food in the freezer and thaw in the refrigerator.
- 2) Properly wash hands, all bowls, utensils and contact surfaces after handling raw food
- 3) Limit time food is held at room temperature. In other words, do not use a free-choice method where food is out and available at all times.
- 4) After contact with animal feces, wash your hands with warm water and soap.

Is it convenient?

More than you would think! There are many ways to approach feeding your animal raw. Once you understand the basic principles, you can put together raw meals for your animal or for maximum convenience, you can feed a pre-prepared raw meal. These raw prepared meals are fresh, flash-frozen, vacuum packed, with pre-ground 60-80% meat & bone / 20-40% vegetable. Just thaw, portion and serve. There are a number of good choices on the market in Canada that offer a range of protein and seasonable vegetable sources. The addition of some sea kelp and EFA oil will help complete the meal.

We are proud to carry and feed our own dogs raw food meals from the following Canadian companies:

Paws & Claws Pet Pantry – Hamilton, Ontario - www.freshpetfood.ca

Mountain Dog Food – Edmonton, Alberta - www.mountaindogfood.com

For more information and to see a descriptive video of the product and its packaging, please click the link below:

<http://www.mountaindogfood.com/RawHelp/train/closer.htm>

How much will it cost?

This can be a tricky question to answer, as the answer depends on the size and breed of your animal, how many pets you have, and their activity levels. Raw feeding is comparable in cost to a “premium” brand kibble. Any difference in cost will be offset by the health benefits you will witness in your pets.

To keep costs down if feeding multiple dogs, you can feed whole chicken pieces such as necks or backs for one meal and a meat and veggie prepared dinner for the second meal.

Can I mix kibble with raw foods?

NEVER mix kibble with raw food! They both digest at different rates. The digestive rate for dry processed food is much longer than for raw food, 12 to 14 hours compared to only four to six hours for raw food. Mixing raw with kibble could lead to digestive upset.

But isn't dry kibble good for my pet's teeth?

Carnivores have teeth that are meant to rip, tear and shred meaty bones that they then gulp and swallow. Raw meats and vegetables also have enzymes that keep teeth clean and the gums healthy.

Pets fed a raw diet have much cleaner teeth. The processed or cooked foods eaten by pets today are high in two substances: soluble carbohydrates and soluble calcium. These two nutrients attack a dog's mouth at every meal by over-feeding bad oral bacteria, which causes Plaque/Tartar, gingivitis, halitosis ("doggy" breath) and eventually blood disorders. In addition, processed foods do not contain the naturally occurring enzymes found in raw foods so necessary for clean teeth. Through the use of raw bones and a healthy raw diet, your pet can have a sparkling white set of chompers and sweet smelling breath!

How do I transition my pet to a raw diet?

Many animals do well switching to a raw diet cold turkey. While some people transition their pets by alternating meals and days. Do what's best for your animal.

Adding digestive enzymes and probiotics when beginning for a few weeks can also be helpful.

Cats tend to be more finicky. One way to overcome this is to put one small piece of human meat on top of their kibble. Keep doing this over several meals and eventually take the kibble away. This way, your cat will get use to it's smell and presence. Don't get discouraged. People tend to panic if their cat misses a meal but don't worry, if they are hungry, they will eat.

Some animals experience a “detox” phase. Loose stools with or without mucous and discharge from the eyes are some things you may notice. These are some signs of the body’s digestive system adapting to the new diet and also of the body getting rid of toxins, toxins that may have built up from a poor diet, and excessive use of drugs and/or vaccines.

Once my pet is on a raw diet, what changes can I expect to notice?

- 1) Stools will be smaller and harder. Raw food is much more nutrient dense and concentrated.
- 2) Your pet will drink a lot less water. The moisture in raw food is very high.
- 3) Stools may contain white matter. This is because of the bone content in the diet.
- 4) Finally you will notice benefits: increased energy, cleaner teeth and overall better health.

When fed a raw diet, stool size in general will be darker, much more compact and odourless compared to when a dog has been fed processed pet foods. This is because raw foods contain no extra or unusable fillers or grains. This will also prevent excess gas caused by digestive upset and intestinal stress.

The stool colour may vary somewhat depending on what protein and vegetable sources are being fed at any given time. When first feeding a raw diet the stools may also be loose and white in colour or mucus covered. This is a normal reaction by the animals’ system. It is likely experiencing a detoxification and will normalize between 2-10 days. You can assist the process by adding digestive enzymes (from your local health store) and low fat yoghurt with an active bacterial culture to replenish the good bacteria in the gut. To firm up the stools you can add a small amount of canned pumpkin to the food. Do not stop feeding raw though because unsettled stools are an indicator that your animal’s system is righting the wrongs caused by years of heat processed, nutrient deficient foods.

Most animals do not require much supplemental water when fed raw. There is enough moisture to suit most of their basic requirements in the raw fresh

foods. When fed dry cooked kibbles however animals need to consume additional fresh water to re-hydrate the dry food in order to digest it and deal with the excess levels of sodium. In many cases they will only seek additional water during periods of excess heat or activity. No matter how you are feeding however, you **must** still provide a source of clean fresh (ideally non-chlorinated and non-distilled) water to your animal at all times in case they do require it.

******* The information in this document is meant for informational purposes and not meant to replace the advice of your veterinarian. We encourage you to do what you feel is best for your animal, and that includes research. *******

Source material credits and additional reading recommendations:

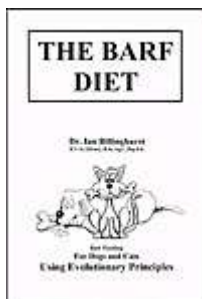
Web based references:

BARF For Beginners - <http://www.njboxers.com/faqs.htm#started>

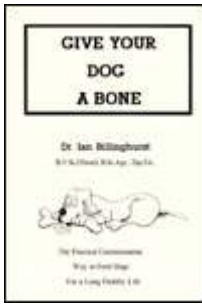
BARF World - <http://www.barfworld.com/>

Paws & Claws Pet Pantry - www.freshpetfood.ca

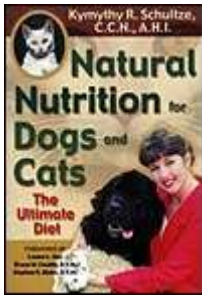
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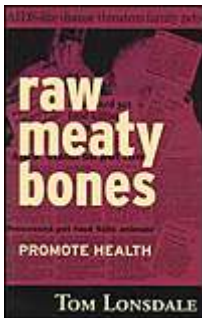
THE BARF DIET By Ian Billinghurst



GIVE YOUR DOG A BONE, The Practical Commonsense Way to Feed Dogs for a Healthy Life By Ian Billinghurst



ULTIMATE DIET: NATURAL NUTRITION FOR DOGS AND CATS *by* Kymthy Schultze



RAW MEATY BONES by Tom Lonsdale