

Beginners Guide to Feeding a Raw Diet



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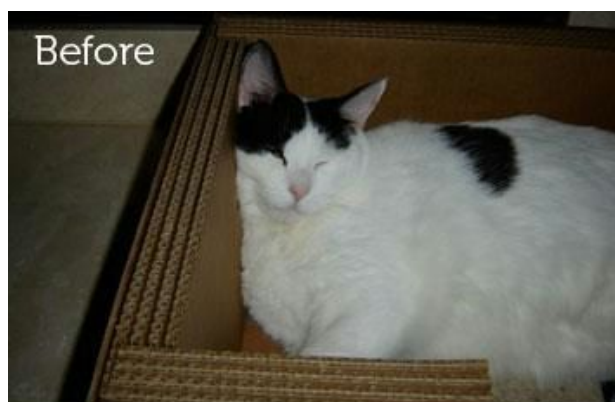
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Beginners Guide to Feeding a Raw Diet

The following information is meant to provide the user with basic knowledge of raw feeding for canines. This is not meant to provide or replace any veterinary medical opinion. We have done our best to ensure that this information is complete, accurate and up-to-date, but will not be held liable for errors or omission in any context, or for any loss or damage of any kind incurred as a results of the use of this context.

My own journey into raw feeding started with my cats. I fed them nothing but what was touted as the highest quality kibble, yet in 2006, my sweet Star passed away suddenly at the age of 9 from renal failure. And so my research and education about species appropriate diets began. After a LOT of research, I finally made the switch to raw for my cats.

Like many kibble feeding parents, I was giving less than the recommended daily amount, yet Kenny was still incredibly overweight. After switching him to a raw diet, well, I'll let the picture below do the talking!



My cats were on a 100% raw food diet, yet when we rescued Luna, I was going to attempt to keep her on a kibble diet. My initial thinking was that this would be more convenient

and much cheaper since. In hindsight it was a completely flawed way of thinking, but it actually turned out to be a good experiment in the end.

If you read [Our Story](#), you know that Luna was a very sick little puppy when she was dumped at the rescue organization. She had Parvo and was extremely malnourished. When we brought her home, then sent us home with a bag of Science Diet. Science Diet has since updated their recipe to include "More Natural Ingredients." But back in the day, one of the first ingredient was either wheat or corn gluten. Neither of which is natural in a canine's diet. Luna's digestive issues were horrible. We were outside with her every two hours throughout the night with some pretty serious explosions. Many times she could barely make it outside. And this is AFTER we made the switch to a "high quality" kibble.

The bottom line is this, "high quality" kibble is infinitely better than a typical commercial dog food (i.e. Science Diet), but they are still processed foods that are "dead." You will never get complete amino-acids, enzymes and vitamins that your dog needs for his digestion, immune system and clean teeth from cooked, processed dog food. Processed food is just that...processed.

There are so many benefits to feeding your dog raw. One of my absolute favorites is to see how incredibly bright and clear their eyes are. It's noticeable! My dog's teeth are pearly white and we have never had to brush or do a dental treatment with them. In addition, eating raw, meaty bones gets them using their jaws and teeth the way they were meant to be and gets their brains involved in eating at well. Their coats are soft and shiny, with no stinky dog smell. Our dogs are lean and muscular, and it's very easy for me to get weight off them if needed (when Nero goes to trial, we like him even leaner). Their poops are smaller, firmer and definitely less stinky compared to kibble poops. Their immune systems are in check and we rarely have vet visits, except for the typical puppy ones. And, at the end of the day, it just feels good knowing that my dogs are getting the best quality food possible. I want them to live as long and as healthy a life as possible and I know feeding them a species appropriate diet is one way to do that.

Dog Digestion 101

First, let's take a really high level look at how dogs eat and their digestion...

Take one look at a dog's mouth and you know that she is an carnivore. They are perfectly designed to tear and shred meat. Incredibly sharp and pointed teeth and extremely powerful jaws. Dogs cannot mash food like we can since they do not have molars, nor do they have the capability to move their jaw sideways.



Dogs do not have any amylase enzymes in their saliva as humans do. Amylase helps to break down starchy foods into sugars before leaving the mouth. Does your dog have a large amount of cavities or plaque/tartar build up? Now you know why! All those starches are sticking to his teeth. Dogs use their teeth to cut their food into small enough chunks that they can swallow and then their stomach does the rest. One important thing to note here...small enough pieces of food that your dog can swallow is going to be very different than small enough pieces that a human can swallow.

Your dog's saliva contains an enzyme called lysozyme, which kills any bacteria that might be present (something we as

humans do not have). After the food is torn into small enough pieces to swallow, it then passes into the esophagus and then into the stomach. Here is another huge difference between human and canine digestion. The dog's stomach is MUCH more acidic than humans (4-5 times higher than humans!). This acidic environment allows for dogs to easily digest bone, as well as any other less than appetizing hunks of meat. The hydrochloric acid in your dog's stomach does the majority of the heavy lifting when it comes to their digestion and works to kill any harmful bacteria, which allows them to eat many foods that we can't.

Okay, so now you know and understand that dog's digestion is very different than ours, let's get on to how to feed them!