

# HEALTHIER DIET for HEALTHIER PETS

## WHY IS FOOD SO IMPORTANT FOR OUR PET'S HEALTH?

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1. A bad diet harms the body and a good diet heals the body.
2. The negative effects of a bad diet are stronger than the positive effects of supplements and other holistic therapies.
3. Food provides the raw materials for the body to rebuild itself.

## WHAT IS SPECIES APPROPRIATE DIET?

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Species appropriate diet means that each species on earth should be eating the foods that they are meant to eat in order to thrive. Example:

1. Cats and dogs are carnivores and they are meant to eat meat
2. Cow are herbivores and they are meant to eat grass, hay and other plant materials.

## WHY IS FRESH FOOD THE BEST FOR OUR FURRY FRIENDS?

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1. High levels of naturally occurring nutrients.
2. Unknown nutrients that have not been discovered yet.
3. Fresh food diets have variety and quality. They are also whole, fresh, & minimally processed.
4. It predisposes our pets to health and long life.

## ORDER OF PREFERRED DIETS

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1. Fresh or frozen raw food
2. Balanced cooked diet or commercial freeze-dried (dehydrated)
3. Canned food (Find one **without carrageenan**; it induces inflammation of intestines)
4. Dry kibble food☹: No more than 50% of dry kibble in the total diet. Ideally none!

**Good quality diets are fresh and as close to their natural state as possible**

## WHY DOES A DRY KIBBLE DIET HARM THE BODY?

1. Dry kibble foods are highly-processed food that is cooked to death. Most of the nutrients are destroyed in the cooking process so the vitamins and minerals have to be added back in.
2. Dry kibble foods are high in refined carbohydrates, and low in good quality, easily digestible proteins; whether it is grain-free or not. Dogs and cats don't have any requirements for carbs. When they eat that much carbs, it is like us eating donuts and candy bar as our meals.
3. Most dry kibble foods are dirty. They contain pesticides, heavy metals and antibiotics because they made from poor quality ingredients, that is why they are cheap.
4. Most dry kibble foods are formulated to meet the AAFCO minimum daily requirement of vitamins, minerals, proteins and fats, not for optimal health.

***\*When animals are not eating a healthy diet of fresh foods that support the body, their cells become weak, and they are not able to fight off infections or cancerous cells. That is when disease develops.***

## DIETARY DISEASE OF DOGS

1. Skin allergies (food or environmental) and ear infections
2. Inflammatory diseases and auto-immune diseases such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease
3. Obesity
4. Cancer

## DIETARY DISEASE OF CATS

Cats should **never** eat dry food because it causes serious health problems.

1. Obesity and diabetes. The high amount of **carbohydrates** in dry food (conventional, holistic and grain-free) is making cats fat and prone to diabetes. This also includes grain-free dry foods because carbohydrates are needed to make the crunchy kibble.
2. Feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) and urethra obstruction. FLUTD generally means bladder and urethra inflammation. Cats are designed to get most of their water from food. Moisture level in dry food is too low, causing our cats to be in a constant state of mild dehydration. This leads to very concentrated urine that is prone to the development of crystals and inflammation in the bladder. The symptoms are urinating outside of the litterbox or crying during urination. The urinary stones are life-threatening in male cats because they can get stuck in their small urethra and block urine outflow. If the stone is not removed early, the bladder can rupture and he can die within minutes. This problem is entirely preventable by stopping feeding of dry kibble.

## CANNED FOOD

Better than dry kibble, but it is still a processed food. Do not recommend as a main diet; best as an add on to a main diet. Find a good quality canned food that does not contain carrageenan. It is a thickener without any nutritional value that induces intestinal inflammation and cancer when used over time. Look at the ingredient list of the canned food for any poor quality ingredients such as corn, wheat and soy.

## COOKED FOOD AND FREEZE-DRIED FOOD

Freeze-dried foods are raw meat that is dehydrated at a low temperature. This is a good option for people who are not comfortable with feeding frozen raw foods. The food needs to be soak in warm water to rehydrate them before feeding. Freeze-dried food are the most expensive way to feed pets, so I mainly recommend them for cats and smaller dogs.

Cooked foods can be homemade or bought from a pet food company. They are good for pets with sensitive stomachs.

## FROZEN RAW DIETS

Raw diets are the best for dogs and cats in general. It is the closest to what dogs and cats eats in the wild. The protein is not denatured through the cooked process, so it is more digestible. The nutrients and enzymes are intact and can be easily used by the body.

What about the bacteria in raw meat? \*Healthy dogs and cats are supposed to be able to handle a high number of bacteria in their food due to their strong stomach acid and short intestinal tract.

The commercial raw pet food is cleaner than the supermarket meats because the raw pet food companies have strict regulations for sterilizing the meats and testing for bacterial contamination.

For the bigger patty types, it can thaw in the fridge overnight. Before feeding, add some warm water to the food to take the chill out. Do not use microwave to warm up the food.

There are 2 types of pets whom I don't recommend feeding raw diet to start:

1. Pets with sensitive stomachs or weak GI tract. Meaning that they get soft stool or vomit easily.
2. Pets who have been eating mainly dry food for the most of their lives.

If you switch them to raw diets suddenly, they are not used to it and will get diarrhea. When starting something new, go low and slow. Start them with a very small amount of canned food or cooked foods to ease them into it, then increase the amount of new food every 3-5 days. After doing well on the new foods for 1-2 months, you can start to introduce a small amount of raw food. Adding supplements can prevent soft stool, such as probiotics, digestive enzymes, colostrum and cooked sweet potatoes.

### COMMON SENSE RULES WHEN FEEDING RAW

1. Practice good hygiene. Wash with soap and water any surface that the raw meat touches.
2. Wash the bowl after your pet finishes eating.
3. Don't let the raw meat sit out for more than 60 minutes.
4. If feeding raw pork or wild-caught fish, freeze the meat for at least 1 month to kills any parasites.

### RAW DIET SOURCES

1. Pet Stores: It can be found in the freezer section of pet stores. Look for the AAFCO statement of "For all life stages" or "Complete and Balanced".
2. Online retailers: BARF world and Darwin sell their food online. They have an autoship program.
3. Coop: Cheaper, but ask if it meets AAFCO Standard. If it does not, then the food needs to be supplemented with multivitamin and/or calcium supplements. Raaw Energy and RAWganics.
4. Slaughter house dog mix. Meats from a farm or supermarket: Mainly only ground meat (so it is not balanced at all) and it can be pretty fatty. Balance the diet with lean meats, organs, multi-vitamin, calcium/minerals, and cooked, pureed vegetables.
5. Meaty Bones: Give the ribs or the necks to your dogs to chew on. Then you can feed the pureed vegetables and supplements separately for dinner. Examples: Venison, beef, chicken backs.

### COOKED vs RAW MEATS

#### Raw Meat

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Downsides</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural unprocessed diet with all the nutrients and enzymes intact.</li> <li>- The nutrients have high bioavailability</li> <li>- It is what dogs and cats are evolved to eat.</li> <li>- Can help alleviate skin allergies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often high fat content</li> <li>- Bacterial contamination in supermarket meats.</li> <li>- It is too "cold" for old, sick or weak animals.</li> <li>- Not for immunosuppressed animals, who are on long term steroids, or chemotherapy.</li> <li>- Not recommended for families with young children or immunosuppressed people.</li> </ul>

#### Cooked Meat

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Downside</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bacteria are killed through the cooking.</li> <li>- Better for older, weak, or sick animals.</li> <li>- Better for weak gut animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many nutrients are lost during cooking</li> <li>- Proteins are denatured</li> </ul>

### HOMECOOKED DIET

Time saving tips:

1. Make a big batch. Freeze 2-3 days' portions in a mason jar. Defrost one portion in the refrigerator the day before you are going to use it.
2. Crockpot homemade diet. This is a super easy recipe that you can make during the weekend for you and your pets.

## Additional Tips:

1. The diet is balanced over time. By feeding a wide variety of foods, it doesn't have to be perfectly balanced for each meal. Pick 1 or 2 new vegetables, or root vegetables each week.
2. Organ meats. About 10% of the meat should be organ meat because organ meats like heart, liver, kidney, and gizzard have different nutritional profiles than muscle meats. Liver and kidney need to be organic.
3. The general ratio of homemade diets:
  - Dogs: 75% Protein, 25% Vegetables (Roots, leafy greens, squash, etc.)
  - Cats: 90% Protein, 10% Vegetables (Roots, leafy greens, squash, etc.)
4. Meat and calcium ratio.
  1. Raw bones: give beef knuckle/marrow bones to chew on after the meal for 10-15 minutes, then rinse and put back into the refrigerator. Other options are chicken/turkey necks. **MUST SUPERVISE THE ANIMALS!** Please read the handout "Homemade Diets for Dogs and Cats" and Dr. Basko's article: <https://www.drasko.com/portfolio-items/throw-bone-4-tips-feeding-bones-dogs-safely/>
  2. Calcium/mineral supplements: Animal Essentials' Natural Seaweed Calcium. Rx vitamins for Pets' Mineral supplements.
5. Multi-vitamin Supplements. Rx Vitamins' Nutritional Support, VetriScience's Multivitamin
6. Fats: Fish oils (1 tsp/50 lbs of body weight), coconut oils (½ tsp/10 lbs of body weight).

## VEGETABLES

Vegetables need to be cooked until soft and then pureed for them to absorb the nutrients because they don't have the digestive enzyme cellulase to break down raw vegetables. In the wild, they would get their vegetables from eating their prey's stomach contents that is pre-digested. Soft vegetables and fruits can be fed raw (berries, cucumber, lettuce, banana, etc.)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Rotate/change brands of commercial pet foods frequently for variety because there is no one perfect brand. Transition the new brand slowly over 1-2 weeks especially if your dog is prone to diarrhea or soft stool.
- Add meats and vegetables to the diet for variety. If the raw diets have a protein-to-fat ratio less than 2:1, add lean meats to increase the protein content, such as fat-free ground turkey, turkey breast, wild-caught white fish, and lean venison.
- Cook vegetables as treats. Keep them in a container in the fridge. And you can give them as treats without worrying about adding extra calories.
- The meats should not be too oily, greasy or fatty. Especially for dogs because it can cause pancreatitis, a life-threatening illness.
- It is okay to add some Italian herbs and garlic. Garlic is only toxic at high amounts, so no more than 1 clove per 20 pounds body weight of your pet.
- Canned sardines in water are high in omega 3 fatty acids and a different source of protein.

## TOXIC FOODS

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1. Grapes, raisins, and currants: Acute kidney failure. Four grapes can be toxic to a 20lb dog.
2. Onions, chives, & leeks: In large amounts, causes red blood cells to rupture.
3. Chocolate: Causes vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis), abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and rarely, death.
4. Macadamia Nuts: Causes severe lethargy, increased body temperature, vomiting, tremors, joint stiffness, and inability to walk. The toxic mechanism is unknown.

5. Xylitol (sugar-free sweetener): Causes an acute, life-threatening low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) within 10-15 minutes. Can be in peanut butter, gum, human chewable supplements.
6. Raw yeast dough: Causes a bloated stomach that can lead to a twisted stomach. Fermenting yeast dough can also produce alcohol that can lead to alcohol intoxication.
7. Alcohol: Causes dangerous drop in blood sugar, blood pressure and body temperature. Intoxicated animals can experience seizures and respiratory failure.
8. Cherry and apricot seeds: Contain cyanide.
9. Rotten or moldy food: Contains tremorgenic mycotoxins that can cause vomiting, agitation, walking drunk, tremors, seizures, and severe secondary hyperthermia.
10. Milk: Causes upset stomach and diarrhea because most cats are lactose intolerant.

\*\*Reference source: **Pet Poison Helpline 855-764-7661** [www.petpoisonhelpline.com](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com)

## TRANSITION TO NEW DIETS

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- Dog owners! For dogs who don't like their vegetables. Tip 1: puree the vegetables or cut into very small pieces and mix it very well into their food. Tip 2: use a little bit of flavor enhancers, such as low sodium chicken broth and a light sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.
- Cat owners! You may need extra extra patience. Cats can be stubborn, especially if they are addicted to dry foods. Tip: little pieces of chicken or sardines on top of the food, bone broth or 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon of melted butter. <https://catinfo.org/docs/TipsForTransitioning1-14-11.pdf>
- Diarrhea-prone dogs: Supplement with probiotics, colostrum, marshmallow root capsules, and canned pumpkin/cooked sweet potatoes/winter squash at 25-50% of total amount of food.

## HELPFUL SUPPLEMENTS AND ADDITIONS

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1. Multi-vitamins, Omega 3 fatty acids/fish oils, and/or canned sardines in water.
2. Virgin coconut oils, turmeric with freshly ground black pepper.
3. Spirulina. A superfood with many nutrients.
4. Vitamin D3 and Vitamin K2. They work better together. Best to test your pet for their Vitamin D levels before starting supplementing. <http://vdiereview.com/blog/category/vitamin-d/>
5. Joint supplements that contains glucosamine.
6. Start any new supplement at half of the regular dose for 1-2 days, then increase to full dose, if there is no diarrhea.

## RESOURCES

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### SUPPLEMENT COMPANIES

Rx Vitamins for Pets Standard Process Vet Classics	Animal Essentials Vetri Science Dr. Dobias	Thorne Research Dr. Mercola
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\*Look for NASC Seal (National Animal Supplement Council)

### BOOKS

Fresh Food & Ancient Wisdom: Preparing Healthy & Balanced Meals For Your Dogs. By **Ihor John Basko DVM**.

Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats. By **Richard H. Pitcairn DVM** and Susan Hubble Pitcairn.

Real Food for Healthy Dogs and Cats: Simple Homemade Food. By Beth Taylor and **Karen Shaw Becker DVM**.

Natural Dog: Holistic Therapies, Nutrition, and Recipes for Healthier Dogs. By **Deva Kaur Khalsa VMD**.

Canine Nutrigenomics: The New Science of Feeding Your Dog for Optimum Health. By **W. Jean Dodds DVM**, Diana Laverdure.

## MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

Animal Wellness Magazine

Dog Naturally

## WEBSITES

[HEALTHYPETS.MERCOLA.COM](http://HEALTHYPETS.MERCOLA.COM) Dr. Karen Becker's website contains many videos and articles.

[WWW.CATINFO.ORG](http://WWW.CATINFO.ORG) Dr. Lisa A. Pierson's website that contains many articles on homemade diets for cats, and how to transition cats from dry foods.

[WWW.DRBASKO.COM/BLOG-PODCAST/](http://WWW.DRBASKO.COM/BLOG-PODCAST/) Dr. Ihor John Basko's website contains articles on nutrition and general pet care.

[WWW.HEMOPET.ORG/EDUCATION/BLOG/](http://WWW.HEMOPET.ORG/EDUCATION/BLOG/) Dr. Jean Dodds' Education center.

## ADDITIONAL ARTICLES

13 Pet Foods – Ranked From Great to Disastrous... ([healthypets.mercola.com](http://healthypets.mercola.com))

<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2010/07/21/13-pet-foods-ranked-from-great-to-disastrous.aspx>

Raw Meat: The Completely Healthy 'Pet' Diet Your Vet Probably Vilifies ([healthypets.mercola.com](http://healthypets.mercola.com))

<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2011/02/15/raw-meat-the-best-and-healthiest-diet-for-pet-cats-and-dogs.aspx>

This Raw Pet Food Trend is Worse than Cheap Processed Food... ([healthypets.mercola.com](http://healthypets.mercola.com))

<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2011/09/01/serious-mistake-with-pets-raw-food.aspx>



## RECOMMENDED BRANDS

FROZEN RAW	FREEZE-DRIED	CANNED
Abady	Honest kitchen	Addiction
Answers Pet Food	K9 Natural & Feline Natural	By Nature
BARF World	Northwest Naturals	Dave's Pet Food
Bravo	Rawbble	B.F.F.
Darwin's Natural Pet Products*	Primal	Earthborne
Evolove Raw	Sojo	Solid Gold
Hare Today Gone Tomorrow	Stella & Chewy's	Taste of the Wild
Instinct Raw (Nature's Variety)	Sundays Pet Food	Tiki Cat
K9 Natural & Feline Natural*	Ziwi Peak	Weruva
Oma's Pride		Wysong
Primal	<b>COOKED</b>	Ziwi Peak
Raaw Energy (Co-op)	Chi Dog	
RAWganics (Co-op)	Raised Right	
Rad Cat Raw Diet	Smalls	<b>DRY KIBBLEFOOD</b>
State of Nature Raw	Take the frozen raw food and lightly cook it on a stove top with little water, broth, or butter.	Abady
Stella & Chewy's		Acana
Steve's Real Food		Addiction
Tucker's		Fromm Family
Vital Essentials	*Sells Frozen green tripe	Taste of the Wild

## FRESH FOODS SUGGESTIONS

### **Protein**

- Beef
- Lamb
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Duck
- Rabbit
- Venison
- Pork (cooked)
- Pheasant
- Alligator
- Bison
- Kangaroo
- White Fish (wild caught)
- Sardine
- Salmon
- Eggs (chicken, duck)

### **Organs: 10% of meats**

- Frozen green tripe
- Liver
- Heart
- Kidney
- Gizzard
- Lung
- Spleen
- Kidney

### **Beans <5% of total diet (pressure cook)**

- Any Beans

- Lentils

- Split peas
- Chickpeas

### **Vegetables**

#### Hearty greens-Cooked

- Beet leaves
- Cabbage
- Bok Choy
- Kale
- Broccoli Rabe
- Spinach
- Collard greens
- Swiss chard

#### Salad greens- Ok Raw

- Romaine
- Dandelion greens
- Spring salad
- Herb mix
- Watercress

#### Other Vegetables

- Alfalfa Sprouts
- Asparagus
- Bell Pepper
- Bitter Melon
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Brussels sprouts
- Celery
- Cucumber (de-seeded)
- Eggplant

- Green/String Beans

- Kelp/Seaweed
- Mushrooms
- Italian Parsley
- Peas
- Radish
- Summer Squash
- Zucchini

### **Starch Vegetables**

- Pumpkin
- Winter squash
- Sweet Potato/Yam
- Carrots
- Parsnip
- Turnip
- Taro root
- Tomatoes cooked in oil
- Beet roots
- Yucca

### **Fruits- only a little in winter time**

- Apples
- Pears
- Melons
- Pineapples
- Papaya
- Blueberry
- Banana
- Cantaloupe
- Coconut meat

- Fresh Figs

- Kiwi Fruit
- Mangos
- Peach
- Raspberry
- Blackberry
- Strawberry
- Watermelon

### **Whole Grains <5%**

- white rice
- Quinoa

### **Fats**

- Fish oils
- Grass-fed Butter
- Avocado flesh (Not toxic to dogs & cats)
- Coconut oils
- Olive Oils

### **Spices**

- Basil, Thyme, Rosemary
- Fennel Seed
- Coriander
- Dill
- Garlic (No more than 1 clove/20lbs)
- Ginger Root
- Turmeric
- **Not too much**
- Cheese, Plain Yogurt