

# Feeding A Raw Diet For The First Time

## Switching from kibble or canned food and its benefits.\*

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Congratulations. You are about to embark on a wonderful voyage of discovery. Switching your pets' diet from industrial food to wholesome, raw, natural food akin to the diet of wild animals will bring innumerable benefits for you and your pets.

Unlearn conventional dogma. Initially you may be feeling a bit apprehensive and wanting a smooth transition. How, then, to make the process as easy and enjoyable as possible? Perhaps the best advice I can give you is to make strenuous efforts to 'unlearn' the beliefs and assumptions you've depended on these past years — or at the very least, keep your beliefs and assumptions in suspense until you've experienced the multiple benefits of a natural diet.

When I first made the transition to feeding my own animals a natural diet and recommending a natural diet for my clients' animals I was wracked with conflicting beliefs and ideas. At the vet school I'd been conditioned (brainwashed) to believe that pets were best fed industrial food formulated by so-called experts in white coats. The supermarket shelves were packed with products that must be good for animals — otherwise they would not be there — I thought. And after five years at vet school and several years in vet practice I rather thought I was in a key position to diagnose and treat pets. Vet text books, vet associations and veterinary regulatory authorities all reinforced these attitudes and assumptions.

By even contemplating rejection of the industrial offerings and acceptance of raw food set up all sorts of internal conflicts and contradictions. Fear (False Expectations Appearing Real) set in. I was concerned lest my recommendations led to pets choking, suffering serious metabolic disease or bacterial infection. By going against conventional wisdom I was risking the ire of clients, colleagues and maybe even risking disciplinary action.

Building a new paradigm about nutrition, health and disease is a bit like building a new house. First clear the rubbish, level the ground and lay firm foundations. We want our house to stand the test of time without cracks opening up revealing poor construction on shaky ground. Same with our new way of seeing our pets, their nutritional and health needs. Make sure to avoid rubbishy old ways of thinking and unsound foundations.

This past fifteen years I've been writing books and articles and promoting the theoretical side of raw feeding. Recently I reopened one of my vet hospitals and am now seeing puppies, kittens, dogs and cats. Without exception the owners have been feeding junk food and without exception their pets suffer some form of junk food induced disease. Regardless of the

reason for the visit to the clinic, clients are treated to a dissertation on the wonders of a natural diet.

## **Natural diet essential for health.**

Most clients see the obvious connection between diet and good health. Scrawny puppies and kittens gain new vitality. Middle aged animals gain bright eyes, shiny coat and new relaxed demeanor. In general older animals need dental treatment as well as a change of diet. Dentistry and diet taken together work wonders.

Over the past few weeks we've performed dental treatments on several dogs and cats. One owner of a 12 year old dog wanted 'some arthritis pills just like the other vet gave'. Instead I pointed out the woeful state of the little dog's mouth and gained permission to perform dentistry. I pulled seventeen teeth and cleaned the rest. The patient made a marvelous recovery. The next dog had fainting episodes. It too had seventeen teeth removed and started on a natural diet. 'Why didn't the other vets recommend this treatment?' asked the owner. Needless to say the patient is vastly improved and the proud owner made a special visit to show us the spritely new dog.

Another owner was a bit concerned about the bad breath affecting her eight year old terrier. Now, with 21 less teeth, the dog relishes chicken frames, quail and ox heart. The owner is a firm believer.

Josh and CJ wandered in to meet me, the new vet in town, and left with chicken frames, lamb's head and ox gullet. A few days later they appeared at the door with their one year old dogs, Buddha and Ellie. 'Within 24 hours the smell of the coat and the smell of the breath had started to improve. Within 48 hours the dogs were odor free and stopped eating each other's poop' they enthused. I offered the dogs an ox bible (omasum) to chew on whilst we talked.

Note the owner's 'before' and 'after' comments revealing how the animals' health improved immensely — without a visit to the vet. In fact the owner saved herself thousands in vet bills simply by changing the diet.

## **Getting Started**

In an ideal world puppies and kittens would be first introduced to large pieces of natural food whilst still in the nest. They gain the skills to tackle tough chewy food and learn to eat communally. It's a fun time for the animals as they tug and compete for food.

Getting started with a new puppy or kitten when it's already eating junk food poses a problem. Do you introduce changes gradually or switch the diet abruptly? I recommend that, if possible, you make a complete change without any lead-up. Simply stop the old diet and start the new. At first it's best to choose and stick with one food type until the changeover has been completed successfully. Whole chickens or chicken backs and frames make a good initial meal for all sizes cats and dogs.

Simply throw the items on the ground and watch your pet sniff, lick and finally seize the morsels. You may feel the urge to hover for the first few feeding sessions. Try to hover at a distance and so avoid crowding your pet. After about a week feeding chicken or other chosen food and providing there are no digestive upsets, you can introduce a variety of other large raw meaty bones and carcasses. Allow a week or so to introduce each new food item before moving on to the next.

For lots of additional information do have a look at the articles, books, photos and videos at [www.rawmeatybones.com](http://www.rawmeatybones.com). Soon you'll be a seasoned expert educating and entertaining your friends and relatives about the wonders of a natural diet.

\*This article is primarily for dog and cat owners. However, if you own ferrets or exotic carnivores then the basic principles are the same.