

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO FEEDING YOUR PETS A RAW FOOD, SPECIES-APPROPRIATE DIET

Inside:

Why Raw Diets for Cats and Dogs Make Sense

Skin Allergies: Analyzing an Uncomfortable Situation

Frequently Asked Questions about
Companion Natural Pet Food Products



www.CompanionNaturalPetFood.com

Why Raw Diets *for Cats and Dogs* Make Sense

By Stacy L. LaPoint

DOGS AND CATS ARE CARNIVORES

All breeds of dogs are 99.9% genetically identical to the grey wolf.¹ Even the giant and toy breeds hardly differ internally from the wolf. Domestic cats are strict carnivores, requiring even higher levels of protein than dogs to thrive.

Over thousands of years, dogs evolved from wolves as humans befriended the good-natured pups lingering around their waste piles, camps and villages. Dogs will scavenge to stay alive and are considered opportunistic carnivores that will eat some vegetation. However, their diet of choice (species appropriate diet), is raw meat and bone, as well as blood, organs, and organ contents of prey animals.

The Timber Wolf Preservation Society in Franklin, Wisconsin feeds its pack an average of 4-5 lb of raw chicken and beef heart per day, along with donations of kibble on which they are allowed to free feed. They are not vaccinated and are monitored by the vets at UW Madison School of Veterinary Medicine. The average life span of the Timber Wolf Preservation Society animals is 13-18 years.

Dogs have not evolved beyond this diet of raw meat and do not have bodies designed to use high levels of carbohydrates (found in dry, grain-based foods) for energy over the long term. Carbohydrate overload, along with over-vaccination and cosmetic breeding, seems to be a major precursor to disease in our domestic animal population.

THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY AND EVOLUTION

Dry kibble and canned pet foods were designed for the convenience of the human, not for the health of the pet. From the minute food is cooked, it is less than natural-- the nutrient content becomes markedly diminished. Original dog food companies sold raw horsemeat to breeders and kennels because it was known and accepted that dogs are carnivores and should eat raw meat. It was suddenly, and approximately just 100 years ago, that grain-based diets were introduced to dogs and cats; not nearly enough time for their systems to evolve to accommodate and utilize carbohydrates as a main energy source.

Most kibbles are 40+% grain, cooked at high temperatures and use low quality ingredients such as meat and bone meals made by rendering plants, which can be contaminated with heavy metals, drugs and other toxins. They often contain fillers to bulk the stool, such as beetroot powder, and are fortified with large amounts of synthetic vitamins, which some believe are not as easily absorbed as food based nutrients. This, along with over-vaccination and cosmetic breeding, has caused a dramatic

¹ Marion Schwartz, A History of Dogs in the Early Americas (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997)

increase in canine/feline diabetes, cancers, autoimmune disorders, joint and digestive disorders, and allergy related chronic ailments. Domestic animal immune systems are often suppressed due to poor nutrition, which leaves them more susceptible to parasite infestations, fungal infections, tooth decay and digestive disorders.

Preservatives, color and flavor enhancers, and rancid and dangerous trans-fats are also used to "trick" animals into eating the dry foods. If kibble manufacturers didn't disguise the true taste and smell, dogs would likely avoid it all together. Cats are easily addicted to flavor enhancers and additives such as propylene glycol and sugar; they might actually go on hunger strike if they don't get the food they are used to eating year after year.

WHY MOST VETS ARE NOT AWARE

Many people choose to make their own pet food because they realize it's about as complicated as preparing meals for their family. Julia Child once said, "You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces, just good food from fresh ingredients." What makes so many people think it is any different for their pets? The answer is the pet food industry, as well as our vets who have been trained in nutrition by the pet food industry, if they've been trained in nutrition at all. In most vet schools, nutrition courses are elective.

Vets often promote and sell some foods because those brands are produced by the corporate conglomerates. Corporations often provide vet schools with computers, textbooks and nutritional information; information which is based on their scientific research, conducted on their research animals. Most vets don't know anything else about pet food ingredients and pet nutrition unless they have done research on their own time.

These days, many veterinary offices offer several varieties and brands of raw pet food. Progressively thinking vets are becoming aware of the relationship between pet food and pet health or disease. Please visit our web site for retail locations near you.

BACK TO BASICS: IMITATING THE PREY ANIMAL CONCEPT FOR YOUR PET'S DIET

The prey animal concept is an easy one to follow if you just imagine your dog eating a whole chicken, duck, pheasant, deer, rabbit or fish. The same goes for a cat eating a mouse, bird or rabbit. There is a growing movement of people in the US, Europe, Canada, Japan and Australia who are either making their own pet food or buying prepackaged raw foods for their companion animals. When considering home-prepared meals, the ingredients are easy to get, less expensive than your own groceries, and are all human-grade in quality. Although I won't go into the process of making your own pet food here, I will just say that anyone can do it, on almost any budget with the help of a book or two and a bit of confidence.

ENZYMES ARE THE KEYS TO HEALTH

Raw foods have live enzymes present that are crucial in both the breakdown of food and absorption of nutrients. Cooked foods (i.e., kibbles and canned foods) lack these enzymes and force the pancreas to work harder to provide the enzymes necessary to break down food for fuel. A lack of proper enzymatic activity in the diet would cause a myriad of health problems in any animal. Pets don't have digestive enzymes in their saliva, as humans do, so cooked food rots in their mouth, which causes gum disease and tooth decay over time. Raw food, with enzymes in tact, will break down quicker in the mouth, which naturally limits the production of bacteria and tartar.

SKIN ALLERGIES:

Analyzing an Uncomfortable Situation

By Stacy L. LaPoint

According to a national survey, veterinarians treat more skin disorders than any other problem. So many of us know the heartbreaking, helpless feeling we get when our dog is suffering an allergic reaction. Allergies, which manifest through the skin, are some of the worst maladies dogs must often endure. Whether the itch is localized, causing them to scratch bite and lick an area raw, or, over the entire body, causing restless nights of shaking and scratching from the constant skin crawling itch, both scenarios are all too familiar to so many dogs. The skin is a good outside indicator of what is going on inside the body. Why is it that so many dogs are allergic? It doesn't seem natural, you say? Often, it's not.

Two skin conditions commonly seen in dogs are yeast infections and hot spots. Yeast is a sour smelling fungus often found in the ears of dogs with chronic ear infections. It's accompanied by a lot of dark waxy build-up in the ear canal, causing the dog to scratch and shake its head. Another manifestation of yeast overgrowth is dry, flaking, itchy skin, pretty much anywhere on the body. Hot spots are a nickname for a common condition called Pyotraumatic Dermatitis. It consists of a bacterial infection, usually staphylococcus intermedius, that causes a painful oozing sore to develop anywhere on a dog's body. Hot Spots burn and itch terribly and can spread from the licking and scratching.

Like humans, many dogs have a genetic predisposition making them unable to tolerate airborne dust, pollens and molds (inhalant allergens); food ingredients such as grains, fillers and chemical additives (food allergens); or, something toxic such as flea bites, contact with cleaning chemicals, pesticides, herbicides and vaccinations (environmental allergens).

However, in many cases, it isn't just their genes that cause them to fall victim to allergens, but an overloaded immune system unable to fight off the constant attack of several antigens at once. An example is the case of a dog that handles an undiscovered food allergen all winter without symptoms, but when summer rolls around and the pollen counts go up the immune system can't cope and allergy symptoms show up. A diet change at the time the itching starts can alleviate the reaction. Obviously not much can be done about exposure to pollen, so the thought is to reduce the allergens to which the dog is being exposed; a change in food may eliminate a potential contributor to the problem.

Diet seems to be one of the biggest underlying reasons for many allergic reactions. Dogs today are being fed highly processed food that consists largely of grains. The practice of using large quantities of carbohydrates in dog food is fairly recent, since the Pet Food Industry is approximately only 80 to 90 years old. Scientists know that it takes thousands

of years for a species to evolve in order to adapt to a changing environment. Dogs, being closely related to wolves, have not evolved quickly enough to tolerate such a radical change in their diet from carnivorous to omnivorous with poor-quality ingredients.

Many dogs suffering allergic skin conditions are unable to tolerate gluten, the protein found in grains such as wheat and corn. On top of that, most commercial pet foods are over processed and cooked at high temperatures, again unnatural to a carnivore's system. In a true carnivorous diet, carbohydrates are not the main fuel source. Fat and protein are used for energy. So, when the dog's system is bombarded with carbohydrates in its food an imbalance can occur, allowing yeast to proliferate and other allergic reactions of the skin, ears, and gastrointestinal track to appear.

With cosmetic breeding, many bloodlines today have been compromised genetically by the inbreeding for colors and features sought by judges and fanciers all over the world. Through this practice, many dogs are turning up with pancreatic enzyme insufficiency, and a myriad of other health problems, which leaves them incapable of absorbing necessary nutrients from their food. In addition, there is increasing evidence that over-vaccination is linked to allergies, chronic ailments, and autoimmune disorders. Finally, it is the weakened immune system that allows parasites such as fleas, mange, and worms to take hold.

With over-vaccination and species-inappropriate diets, it's no wonder so many of our dogs can no longer cope with allergens in the environment when they are over vaccinated, not being given the food they are designed to utilize for health or the strong genes their ancestors once possessed. Our domestic companions have become a product of chronic ailments and disease of our own making. What can we do to bring about real change? Consider a several-pronged approach.

SIFTING THROUGH THE OPTIONS

In many cases of chronic allergies, vets will do their best to suppress painful symptoms with drugs such as oral steroids, antihistamines, antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections, steroid creams and ointments, as well as medicated shampoos and short-term hypoallergenic prescription foods. However, the symptoms can and often do return if the underlying reason for the allergy is not discovered and resolved.

In the conventional allergy-testing world, there are four major medical labs analyzing skin and/or blood serum samples from thousands of pets, each year, that show signs of severe allergies. According to Bio-Medical Services (BMS), an allergy testing lab in Austin, Texas, the newer blood serum tests are less painful and faster than the original skin testing methods. In 1989, BMS developed a program of testing for and treating allergies called Pet Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay or Pet ELISA.

At BMS, immunotherapy or hyposensitization is the primary course of action for treating air-borne allergies. The process is supposed to desensitize the animal with scheduled repeated injections, containing small amounts of antigens. The body produces antibodies against the allergens to help form long-term immunity. It is a long and tedious protocol, which takes much diligence on the part of the caregiver.

Some holistically trained veterinarians are instead employing a technique called Nambudripad Allergy Elimination Technique or NAET to find allergens and treat the underlying cause of the reaction. "At least thirty percent of my practice is treating animals with allergies," said Jan Harkins, DVM of the Reedsburg Small Animal Hospital

in Reedsburg, WI. "We've found NAET to be a reliable screening test that is quicker and less invasive than skin and blood tests. We can get very specific in finding the antigens causing the allergies. In most cases we change the diet to raw whole foods. Improving diet and digestion helps almost every allergic condition," concluded Harkins.

With principles based in Chinese Medicine, the diagnostic method used in NAET is Muscle Response Testing (MRT), while the treatment component involves stimulating the spinal nerves via acupressure to re-imprint the brain's recognition of the allergen.

NUTRITION: THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTH

Nutrition seems to be one of the most important factors in long-term relief from chronic allergies. With American farmland being dramatically depleted of nutrients, some important trace minerals are lacking in the diets of humans and animals alike. Research is showing that adding a few important supplements can make a big difference in health. A multi-vitamin and mineral supplement (including trace minerals), a well rounded digestive enzyme supplement (protease for digesting protein, amylase for carbohydrates and lipase for fat), and a Probiotic supplement (healthy bacteria normally found in the intestines) added to the food at the time of serving can dramatically boost the immune system and give dogs a chance to heal. Further conditions of the skin and coat, such as seborrhea, pruritis, and scurf, can be diminished by also adding Essential Fatty Acids to the diet through a combination of fish oil, evening primrose and borage oils.

Changing the diet to one that consists of more quality meat sources and fewer grains almost always helps mild to moderately allergic dogs. Find three or four quality brands of food and rotate them on a quarterly basis to help prevent allergen overload and nutrient deficiencies. Each year, the Whole Dog Journal (WDJ), a monthly magazine dedicated to natural and holistic pet care, creates a valuable list of the top dry, canned and raw dog foods available. The WDJ is a non-biased publication, which doesn't accept advertising and is supported only by subscribers. Find out more at www.whole-dog-journal.com.

Ideally, investigating home-prepared recipe books, written by holistic vets and pet nutritionists (see list at the end of this article), offers an inexpensive way to feed few or no grains using whole unprocessed meats, vegetables and supplements. Consider high-end, grain-free, fresh-frozen raw diets available at specialty pet supply stores and boutiques. Getting as close to a species appropriate diet as possible for your dog will give the most health benefits for the money spent, and often cut down on veterinary bills in the future.

Breeders can help improve bloodlines in their dogs by following these same dietary standards, generation after generation, to produce stronger dogs with stronger immune systems able to better tolerate antigens in the environment. Pups weaned from their mother's milk onto a species appropriate diet will have stronger immune systems than pups that are forced to eat low quality dry foods consisting of mainly grains and fillers.

If your pet is discovered to be highly sensitive to one or more inhalants, such as pollens of trees, grasses, weeds, molds or dust, bathing frequently with soap-free shampoo consisting of Aloe Vera, which contains a glycoprotein called acemannan, can provide relief from inflammation and itching. Colloidal Oatmeal shampoo has also been shown to be effective in offering some relief from inflamed skin conditions. Also, your veterinarian can discuss medicated shampoos for occasional use.

OUR ROLE IN CHANGE

Like in anything, only time will tell if we as a society can make the necessary changes in caring for our dogs to help them overcome their epidemic of allergies and illness. It seems we may have finally grasped the charade of corporate marketing techniques and learned how to read labels and change our own life styles for the betterment of our health. We are buying healthier foods, taking supplements and utilizing complimentary medicine by the millions. Now we just need to realize the same applies to our companion animal population and start at home with our canine and feline family members. They rely on us for all they have to live for-- we owe them health and longevity.

Stacy LaPoiny is Co-Owner of Companion Natural Pet Food. In starting her company, She conducted several years of research regarding the relationship between pet nutrition and health. Stacy also donates time giving talks on the raw diet for dogs and cats.

REFERENCES

Bitomsky, Marilyn. "Digestive Enzymes: The Missing Link." Life Extension Apr. 1999.
Broadhurst, C. Leigh. "The Essential PUFA Guide for Dogs and Cats: Oils cats and dogs need for healthy skin and coats." Nutrition Science News Oct. 2001.

Broadhurst, C. Leigh. "Healing Skin and Coat Conditions." Nutrition Science News Oct. 2001.

Plechner, Alfred J. and Martin Zucker. Pet Allergies: Remedies for an Epidemic. Inglewood: Very Healthy Enterprises, 1987.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Veterinary NAET: www.vetnaet.com, About Probiotics: www.about-probiotics.org.

Bio-Medical Services: www.bmslab.com, Dr. Goodpet: www.goodpet.com

RECOMMENDED READING:

Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats: The Ultimate Diet, by Kymythy R. Schultze, C.C.N., A.H.I.
The Nature of Animal Healing, by Martin Goldstein, D.V.M.

Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats, by Richard H. Pitcairn, D.V.M., Ph.D. and Susan Hubble Pitcairn

Pet Allergies: Remedies for an Epidemic, by Alfred J. Plechner, DVM and Martin Zucker

The BARF Diet: Raw Feeding for Dogs and Cats Using Evolutionary Principles, by Ian Billinghurst, B.V.Sc. [Hons], B.Sc., Dip.Ed.

Enzymes: The Key to Health, by Howard F. Loomis, Jr., D.C., F.I.A.C.A.

COMPANION NATURAL'S PET FOOD PRODUCTS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the amount of meats and vegetables in your foods?

Our dog foods are 25% vegetables, 75% meat/bone (includes organs and fat)

Our cat foods are 15% vegetables, 85% meat/bone (includes organs and fat)

What are the benefits of feeding raw food to my pet?

Caregivers of dogs and cats who have switched their pets to raw food diets have noticed many positive results. This list is just a sampling:

- Overweight pets often loose weight as the carbohydrates are removed from the diet; thin pets gain muscle mass given the high quality protein and fat.
- Pets often stop having painful allergic reactions, which manifest through the skin and GI tract, and become more comfortable and symptom free.
- Hyper pets can become calmer, as many behavioral problems related to allergies can be dramatically reduced or eliminated with species appropriate nutrition.
- Lethargic pets often gain much more energy and personality due to the nutrient dense food and enjoyment they get from eating it.

- Pets with body odor and bad breath often become fresh and clean smelling as their entire body chemistry changes with the introduction of fresh raw food.
- Pets with dull, dry and coarse coats will often become more shiny, lustrous and soft to the touch; along with that, their skin becomes more supple.
- Many pets experience a strengthening of their immune system, which seems to reduce or eliminate symptoms of chronic ailments such as arthritic and joint stiffness, and digestive problems such as inflammatory diseases of the bowel.
- Your pet will experience a better quality of life with a variety of food in its bowl each day just, as you and I can get joy and comfort in our many choices of fresh foods.

Can problems arise from feeding raw food?

Some dogs and cats, especially ones who are middle aged, inactive, overweight or have been fed a dry grain-based food for several years, will need time to adjust to the Chicken, Turkey and Duck varieties which contain ground raw bones. Though rare, in some animals feeding only the poultry varieties several days in a row results in a bout of constipation. It is important that you watch your pet's stools every day, as it is always a good indicator of health in any animal. Feed our Beef Variety on a rotation, along with the poultry varieties, in order to keep the stools from becoming too dry.

If you see your animal struggling to pass a stool after a couple meals of the poultry, feed only the beef variety until the stools pass easily, then gradually reintroduce the poultry. It is also very helpful and important to give a digestive enzyme to your pet before feeding raw food, and for the duration of the pet's life, to aid in digestion and absorption of vitamins and minerals from the ingredients of the food.

Some animals (many of whom may also fit the description above), have a predisposition to suffer a pancreatic attack since pancreatitis can occur suddenly if the pancreas is already inflamed and fat or garbage is ingested. That is why "counter surfing" and "garbage raids" can be especially dangerous. Give animals small amounts of raw food over a period of a few weeks and gradually build into 2 full raw meals per day if you suspect your pet isn't in optimal health.

If your animal has already experienced pancreatitis, a fibrous food such as pureed, canned pumpkin, (not pumpkin pie filling with sugar and other additives), pulped vegetables such as leafy greens, squash and green beans can help with the transition to a raw diet. Use a food processor or blender and enough water for processing to a pulp. Mix in a ratio of one part raw pet food to one part pumpkin and/or vegetables. Again, a digestive enzyme is also very important for these animals.

What to Expect When Feeding Raw Food

Dogs and cats may go through a period of detoxification when starting a new raw diet, especially if the animal is over two years old and has been eating a lower quality dry food. It is sometimes referred to as a 'healing crisis' when the body must dump toxins it has stored in the cells of tissue and in organs such as the liver and skin. The bodies of humans and animals are constantly trying to rid themselves of toxins accumulating from non-nutritive ingredients in food, pollution in the air, and chemicals in water. When toxins are no longer being introduced with the food, the body has more of a chance to rid the built-up waste. There can be symptoms such as waxy build up in the ears, intermittent diarrhea and/or vomiting, lethargy, mild fever, bad breath and skin irritations. This doesn't last very long and it is actually a good sign to see some detox symptoms. Some younger animals or those that have been on higher quality foods may not have symptoms.

When your pet has been eating a raw food diet for a period of time there will also be a change in stool color and consistency. Stools will become lighter in color, often covered with a white chalky powder. This is the digested bone that is ground into the poultry varieties of our foods. This is an excellent sign that your pet is digesting raw bone and getting the calcium and other minerals that it needs. An added benefit from this new diet is that the stools will also have less odor, become smaller with less volume, and become consistently solid and easier to clean up.

What about risks such as Toxoplasmosis, E. coli and Salmonella?

Risks are almost non-existent to healthy adult animals. These risks mainly affect a pet which is already severely ill, severely stressed, has a compromised immune system due to an immune disorder, or is taking immuno-suppressive drugs such as steroids. We recommend these animals be fed cooked, home-prepared foods until they are drug-free and measures have been taken to boost the immune system using supporting herbs and supplements. Once there are visible signs that health has

improved, raw food may be introduced.

Dogs and Cats have digestive systems designed to handle and destroy many bacteria that are harmful to humans, such as Salmonella and E. coli. They have a short, harsh digestive tract, which easily digests raw animal protein, fat and bones, stomach contents of prey animals, feces of other species, and partially decomposed carcasses.

Our foods contain only human grade meats and are frozen solid in order to ensure any Toxoplasma Gondii (Protozoan Coccidium) that may exist are destroyed. To read an article written by Larry Bernstein, DVM, on the risks of Toxoplasmosis in Raw Meat Diets, see the following web address: <http://www.naturalholistic.com/handouts/neospora.htm>

Companion Natural Pet Food is a raw meat product and should be handled as such. Always wash dishes, utensils, surfaces and hands with hot soapy water and allow time to dry thoroughly. Keep away from children. Keep our foods frozen solid until thawing to feed.

We recommend that every pet be given a digestive enzyme and probiotics prior to and during transition to a raw food diet. This will help friendly bacteria colonize in the intestines of your pet and help build a stronger immune system. Visit our web site for many supplemental products such as enzymes, which include probiotics for dogs or cats. Ultimately, the use of enzymes and probiotics should be continued for the duration of a pet's life regardless of what food it eats. These supplements are crucial to overall health, healing and immune support.

Can I cook your raw foods?

Cooking is not recommended. Cooking destroys the enzymes and some nutrients in raw food, defeating the purpose of feeding a raw diet. The Chicken and Turkey Varieties have finely ground bone in them, which is easily digestible in its raw form but cooked bone is not easily digested and may pose health risks. Microwaving to defrost is also not recommended due to the uneven nature of microwave heating. Some of the food gets cooked when defrosting in the microwave.

If you forget to take the food out to thaw, our suggestion for a quick defrost is to place the container in a dish of warm water in your sink. That will speed up the thawing process. In general, you should plan ahead to remove our food from your freezer and allow it to defrost in your refrigerator as you would with your own food.

How do I start my pet on a raw diet?

You should cut back on the portion size of its usual food by the same amount of raw food you are adding. Gradually increase the amount of raw food each day while decreasing the amount of the other food until they are eating all raw. Another option to help your pet begin to enjoy raw food is to mix a little hot water with the food to bring out the aroma of the meat. Just enough hot water to warm the food will make it smell as though it is slightly cooked and bring out the savory smells of the food.

You can also buy something your pet really likes, such as canned mackerel or sardines, and mix with the raw food a little at a time to add a fishy aroma. The transition process could take between one and two weeks depending on your pet. Cats may take slightly longer. Also, cats should never be forced to go without food in order to change their diets. While dogs can fast for a day or two, cats need consistent meals.

Can I mix your food with dry food?

We do not recommend mixing but some people have reported doing so without problems in their pets. Raw food and dry food digest at different rates. Raw food takes about 4-6 hours to move through your pet's system while dry food takes 10-12 hours. Each animal is an individual. Some will experience gastric upset from mixing raw and cooked foods. Also, please remember no matter what food your pet eats, it should never be encouraged to participate in vigorous play or exercise for at least one hour after eating.

How Do I Feed Raw Food While Traveling?

Most kennels will accommodate raw or home-prepared food if they have a refrigerator/freezer on hand, just call and ask. If you are taking your pets on a trip, check your yellow pages for dry ice, which can usually be purchased in small chunks. Use a cooler to keep the food at refrigerated temperatures with dry or regular ice. If you are traveling for more than a week you may need to supplement with a quality, canned food or dry kibble. See the Whole Dog Journal's top 10 list of the

best quality canned and dry foods at www.whole-dog-journal.com.

I've always heard that dogs and cats shouldn't eat human food...

This is a common myth that the commercial pet food industry would like you to believe. Our grandparents and great grandparents fed their companion animals with raw scraps from their own meals because, at the time, there was no such thing as bagged kibble and canned pet food. However, pets should NEVER be given cooked bones from leftover meals from their human companions. While raw bones are easily digested and utilized for important calcium and minerals, cooked bones are dangerous and can cause blockage and/or bowel perforation.

Dogs and cats are carnivores and have the jaw structure to rip tear and swallow prey animals. They do not have flat molars like humans meant for chewing things like grains and whole vegetables. Their digestive tracts are short and manufacture very harsh gastric juices meant to digest whole raw meat and bone and move it through their system very quickly. So, in reality, feeding your pet our raw food is feeding them a species appropriate diet, close to what they would get when eating a prey animal.

Will raw food stop my dog from eating its stools?

We believe it will. Two things likely cause coprophagy, which is the consumption of fecal matter. There is some thought that coprophagy manifests in certain animals due to an underlying nutrient deficiency. Much of today's commercial dry food goes undigested due to its high grain content. The sweet smell of undigested grain can attract some dogs to eat their own stool, or the stools of other dogs and cats. Raw food is usually completely digested.

Will raw food help my pet's allergies?

Most likely, a switch to raw food will alleviate allergic symptoms your pet may be having. Many pets are allergic to protein in grains. These allergies can be seen in symptoms of chronic yeast infections, skin rashes and stiff joints or arthritic conditions. Long-term exposure to large amounts of grains, for these animals, can be a precursor to more serious and permanent illness over time. But, it is never too late to switch to a raw natural diet. Pets of any age can be given a new diet and benefit from it very quickly.

My pet won't eat raw food....

Some pets, especially older ones, can be set in their ways. This means you may need to wean your pet onto a raw food diet. See "How do I Start my Pet on a Raw Diet" above. Once this takes place, your pet will eat each meal with enthusiasm. Another option to help your pet begin to enjoy raw food is to mix a little hot water with the food to bring out the aroma of the meat. Just enough hot water to warm the food will make it smell as though it is slightly cooked and bring out the savory smells of the food.

Some people feed canned fish packed in water and mix the raw food in. However, canned fish alone is not an appropriate long-term diet for pets. Gradually increase the amount of raw food each day while decreasing the amount of the fish until they are eating all raw. This process could take between one and two weeks depending on your pet.

My pet has kidney disease; can I feed him/her your raw diets?

Yes. The most recent research on the effects of protein on the kidneys is showing that the quality of protein makes a difference and dietary protein is not detrimental to kidney function. On the contrary, protein restriction can result in impaired wound healing, diminished immune function, lowered enzyme activities and cellular turnover.¹ Animals with kidney failure should be provided a diet of high quality protein, highly digestible protein, fat as a preferential fuel source, a nutrient dense diet in small volume, moderately fermentable fiber and an optimum ratio of omega 3 to omega 6 fatty acids for nutritional management of inflammation.²

¹ Overview of the Aging Process: Fortify the Food Bowl of the Aging Canine - Part 3, authors Susan Thorpe-Vargas, Ph.D. and John C. Cargill, M.A., M.B.A., M.S., originally printed for DOGWorld Magazine in May of 1999)

² Dietary Management of Clinical Disorders in Dogs, by Dr. R. Kadirvel, Printed in the JOURNAL OF INDIAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION, KERALA, Volume 5, Issue 2, <http://www.jivaonline.com>)

Why do you recommend supplements in addition to what's in your food?

For extra nutritional healing and support, we recommend that a few quality supplements be added to your pet's diet. First, we recommend the use of a digestive enzyme to help your pet get as much nutrition from its food as possible. Next, a probiotic (some digestive enzyme products come with a probiotic included), such as acidophilous, will help maintain a consistent level of healthy bacteria in the intestines. Additionally, adding a quality essential fatty acid supplement, such as fish oil, is important as these are difficult to obtain through diet and should be added separately. Enzymes, probiotics, and essential fatty acids are all destroyed by exposure to heat, light, and air.

How many times a day should I feed my pet?

We recommend feeding your pet twice daily. Just divide its daily food requirement into two equal portions, one to be fed in the morning and one in the evening. This will keep your pet from becoming too hungry from one meal to the next. Feeding smaller meals throughout the day can be beneficial to some pets.

Why do you charge more for cat food than dog food?

Cats require more meat and fewer vegetables to meet their nutritional requirements. Our cat food varieties are more expensive to make, so cost a little more than the dog food varieties.

What are the ingredients of your pet foods?

DOG FOOD

Chicken Recipe: Chicken, Chicken by-products (includes bones, gizzards, hearts and livers), Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Yams, Apples, Alfalfa, Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Garlic, Dried Whey, Potassium Chloride, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Riboflavin, Folic Acid, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (Source of Vitamin K3), Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamin Mononitrate

Turkey Recipe: Turkey, Turkey by-products (includes bones, gizzards, hearts, and livers), Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Carrots, Celery, Alfalfa, Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Garlic, Dried Whey, Potassium Chloride, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Riboflavin, Folic Acid, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (Source of Vitamin K3), Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamin Mononitrate

Beef Recipe: Beef, Beef by-products (includes livers, hearts, kidneys and fat), Cabbage, Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Cantaloupe, Alfalfa, Kelp, Aquamin Sea Minerals (Red Seaweed, Lithothamnion calcareum), Apple Cider Vinegar, Garlic, Dried Whey, Potassium Chloride, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Riboflavin, Folic Acid, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (Source of Vitamin K3), Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamin Mononitrate

Duck Recipe: Duck, Duck by-products (includes bones, gizzards, livers and hearts), Kale, Chard, Parsley, Acorn Squash, Parsnips, Kelp, Dulse (Palmariales), Apple Cider Vinegar, Garlic, Dried Whey, Potassium Chloride, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Riboflavin, Folic Acid, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (Source of Vitamin K3), Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamin Mononitrate

DOG AND CAT FOOD

Fish Recipe: Whole Mackerel (includes bones & innards), Alaskan Pollack, Kale, Chard, Parsley, Acorn Squash, Sun Chokes, Blueberries, Cranberries, Kelp, Dulse (Palmariales), Apple Cider Vinegar, Potassium Chloride, Taurine, Dried Whey, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Niacinamide, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Thiamine Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (source of Vitamin K3), Folic Acid

CAT FOOD

Chicken Recipe: Chicken, Chicken by-products (bones, gizzards, hearts and livers), Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Yams, Apples, Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Potassium Chloride, Taurine, Dried Whey, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Niacinamide, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Thiamine Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (source of Vitamin K3)

Viatmin K3), Folic Acid

Turkey Recipe: Turkey, Turkey by-products (includes bones, gizzards, livers and hearts), Carrots, Celery, Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Alfalfa, Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Potassium Chloride, Taurine, Dried Whey, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Niacinamide, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Thiamine Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (source of Viatmin K3), Folic Acid

Beef Recipe: Beef, Beef by-products (includes livers, hearts, kidneys and fat), Cabbage, Turnip Greens, Collard Greens, Kale, Cantaloupe, Alfalfa, Kelp, Aquamin Sea Minerals (Red Seaweed, Lithothamnion calcareum), Apple Cider Vinegar, Potassium Chloride, Taurine, Dried Whey, Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Calcium Iodate, Niacinamide, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Thiamine Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Menadione Sodium Bisulfate Complex (source of Viatmin K3), Folic Acid

	DOG DIET TURKEY	DOG DIET CHICKEN	DOG DIET DUCK	DOG DIET BEEF	DOG & CAT FISH	CAT DIET TURKEY	CAT DIET CHICKEN	CAT DIET BEEF
GUARANTEED ANALYSIS								
Protein, %	14.30	16.30	17.60	13.70	14.10	15.30	17.20	15.20
Fat, %	3.50	8.06	8.90	11.90	5.35	5.30	2.40	10.30
Carbohydrates, %	.22	3.40	4.20	3.05	3.56	2.43	3.70	.89
Crude fiber, %	.19	.08	.27	.11	.26	.14	.08	.11
Moisture, %	77.70	67.60	66.00	68.90	74.50	74.90	73.00	71.10
VITAMINS								
Vitamin A, IU/kg	38883.00	24412.00	16067.00	45404.00	89118.00	39561.00	36590.00	54152.00
Thiamin, ppm	.84	.84	.85	.96	1.07	1.29	1.60	1.65
Riboflavin/B2, ppm	3.20	3.70	3.00	5.90	2.20	3.90	8.10	7.20
Niacin/B3, ppm	35.20	47.80	36.40	48.20	45.90	29.20	84.90	53.90
Pantothenic acid, ppm	12.50	10.90	7.60	13.60	5.10	13.50	16.60	16.30
Pyridoxine/B6, ppm	2.90	3.00	2.20	3.20	2.80	2.80	18.40	3.60
Folate, ppm	.62	.58	.48	.54	.19	.80	1.37	.55
Vitamin B12, ppm	.06	0.07	.02	.111	.043	.055	.043	.13
Vitamin D, IU/kg	112.00	168.00	150.00	185.00	1272.00	125.00	135.00	181.00
Vitamin E, IU/kg	110.00	42.50	94.30	99.80	96.10	20.00	33.80	20.90
MINERALS								
Calcium, %	1.29	2.60	2.50	1.32	2.17	1.45	1.86	1.06
Copper, ppm	2.36	3.90	2.89	5.94	1.36	1.68	1.70	5.60
Iron, ppm	29.60	29.50	35.00	36.20	20.40	33.30	31.30	35.10
Magnesium, %	0.21	.20	.024	.019	.06	.018	.035	.019
Manganese, ppm	1.38	1.25	2.28	1.55	1.66	.206	2.70	2.10
Phosphorous, %	1.05	1.42	1.40	.50	1.30	.91	.95	.51
Potassium, %	.28	.22	.25	.26	.33	.28	.46	.28
Selenium, ppm	.18	.13	.13	.22	.267	.27	.24	.22
Sodium, %	.11	.16	.16	.08	.10	.15	.10	.09
Zinc, ppm	47.30	51.90	61.60	57.80	30.50	33.10	20.20	33.80
AMINO ACIDS								
Tryptophan	.63	.13	.15	.17	.15	.17	.15	.19
Threonine	.74	.49	.54	.59	.27	.68	.54	.65
Isoleucine	1.12	.58	.66	.59	.64	.78	.65	.65
Leucine	1.19	.89	.96	1.12	1.12	1.21	.97	1.25
Lysine	1.22	.93	1.03	1.07	1.25	1.34	1.02	1.20
Methionine	.39	.30	.34	.33	.40	.42	.33	.36
Cystine	.17	.15	1.63	.14	.15	.17	.16	.16
Phenylalanine	.58	.48	.52	.56	.55	.62	.52	.63
Tyrosine	.51	.39	.42	.45	.47	.57	.42	.50
Valine	.75	.58	.64	.70	.72	.81	.65	.78
Arginine	.94	.71	.79	.90	.83	1.05	.77	.99
Histidine	.41	.33	.36	.41	.40	.44	.36	.46

About Companion Natural Pet Food: Utilizing careful research and combining it with ingenuity and passion, Stacy Lapoint of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, lovingly nursed her beloved dog "Jade" through diagnosed adrenal gland failure (also known as Addison's Disease) by creating a healthy diet of specifically natural ingredients. Inspired and encouraged by that success, she dedicated herself to the development of the highest quality natural pet foods for others. Companion Natural Pet Food has been formulated to meet exacting standards set forth by highly accredited animal nutritionists.