



HOW TO FEED RAW DOG FOOD



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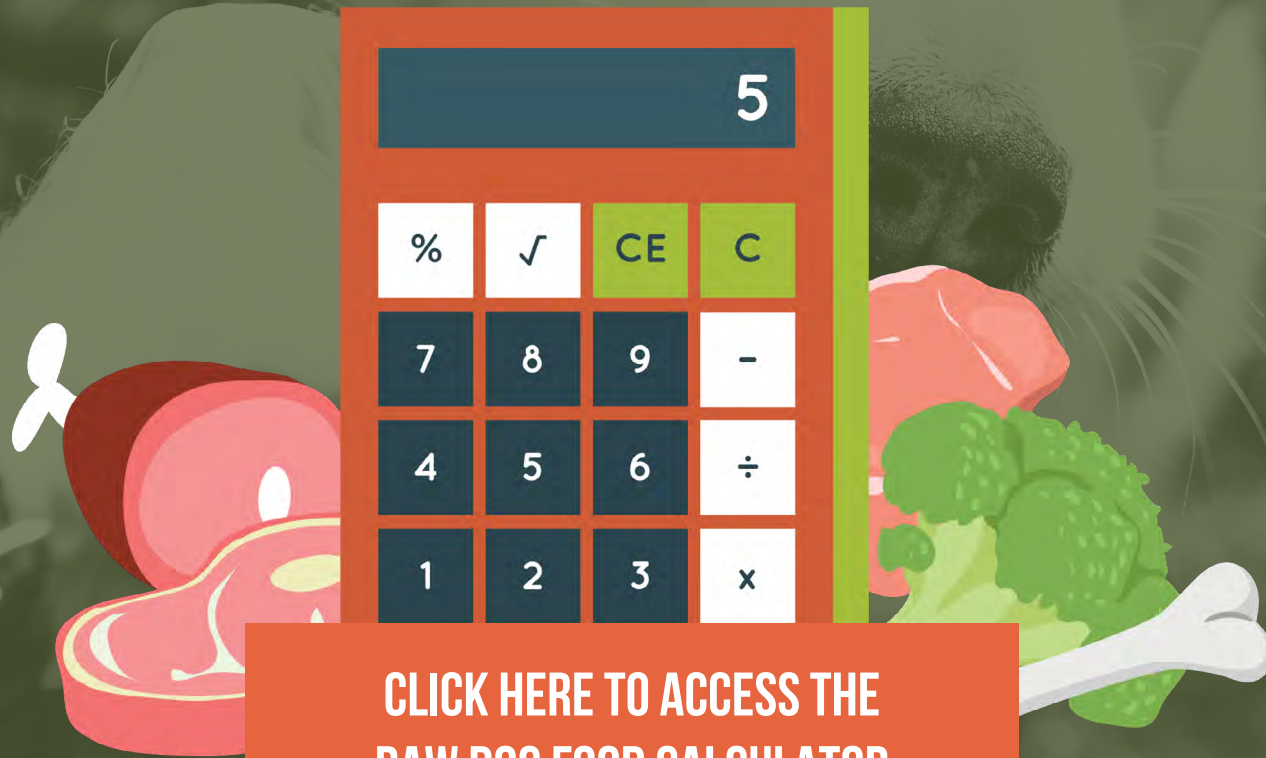
So you want to feed your dog raw, but how? You hear a lot of great things about raw diets for dogs, but raw is more complicated than just pouring food into a bowl and walking away. This eBook will walk you through the steps of feeding raw dog food so that you know exactly what you are getting yourself into.

Raw diets require you to be more involved in your dog's meal prep and eating habits. It's an investment of both money and time, but if you want the best for your dog, some sacrifices need to be made.

There are a few extra steps involved in feeding raw. Build a consistent routine to help simplify the daily and weekly process of feeding raw food. You'll see that raw food preparation isn't as complicated as it sounds.

These helpful tips and best practices can ensure that you are feeding appropriately and that your dog will thrive on their new raw diet.

FEEDING GUIDELINES



**CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE
RAW DOG FOOD CALCULATOR**

PREPARING RAW DOG FOOD



Portioning

Portioning out your pet's food may require you to divide and weigh large blocks of raw food, add supplements, or even mash the food to make it easier for your pet to eat.



FOR LARGER BREEDS:

- Larger portioned, 8oz blocks and patties
- Chubs*



FOR SMALLER BREED DOGS:

- Divide larger blocks or patties into pieces
- Choose a brand that offers 1 to 1.5 oz. kibble-sized pieces or cubes

*Chubs are convenient because you can slice off sections, and typically comes with measurements to help you avoid overfeeding. However, the challenge with larger, bulky formats like this is that the whole package needs to be defrosted at once, forcing you to use the entire chub within 2-3 days, and risk having to throw out the rest.



Defrosting

The principles of handling your own frozen meat apply to your pet's food as well. Defrost times will vary depending on the amount.

The best way to gradually defrost your dog's raw meals is in the fridge in a covered container. This helps prevent the spread of bacteria, and protect any refrigerated consumables from bacteria!

Standard 8 oz. patties can be defrosted overnight in the fridge, while smaller frozen formats, like medallions or bite-sized pieces, will defrost in a matter of hours if stored in a single layer.

Forgot to take out food last night? That's OK. This quick defrost method can save the day:

- Fill the sink or a bowl with room temperature water.
- Put the frozen food, sealed in a Ziploc bag, into the water.
- Let it sit for about 15 minutes.

This should defrost them enough that you can break the food into smaller pieces. Another hour in the fridge and they should be ready to serve.

Other Tips

- Try to avoid storing your dog's raw food at the very back of the freezer as this is the coldest place and will hinder defrost times.
- Never microwave a raw diet. The heat, no matter how low, can destroy nutrients.
- If you are in a bind, you are better off feeding a raw bone or a dehydrated or freeze-dried raw replacement instead of feeding cooked food. The drastic change could lead to tummy troubles.



Rehydrating

If freeze-dried or dehydrated diets are your choice, then you'll need to add water before serving. Each brand will offer instructions for how much liquid you'll need to rehydrate the food, but this is flexible. You can change the texture to your dog's preference by adding more or less water.

Add a little extra nutrition or support to the meal with liquids other than water, such as:

- Bone broth
- Goat's milk

Most freeze-dried diets will rehydrate in a few minutes, but some styles of dehydrated foods take longer. To save yourself some time, you can do some meal prep and rehydrate several meals overnight and freeze what you won't use in the next 3 days. Then just defrost and serve.



Routine

Raw food digests quickly and efficiently, so work on a consistent feeding schedule. This type of routine will help you manage bowel movements, which will be fewer and smaller, and help you manage your pet's weight, muscle development, and activity.

Feeding two meals per day is standard for most adult dogs, but that may need to be increased depending on your dog's calorie requirements and life stage.

Whatever routine works best for yours and your dog's schedule, try to be consistent. Their bodies will use calories more efficiently if meals are properly scheduled.

PREPARING RAW DOG FOOD



Making Adjustments

There are a few more factors that may influence your dog's feeding requirements, like breed, metabolism, and activity levels.

ACTIVITY LEVELS

Calories should be balanced with their activity levels. A strictly indoor dog that only leaves the house in a purse will not need the same calories as a dog park regular. Be prepared to adjust feeding guidelines depending on your dog's energy output.

For days with increased activity, like a play date, a hike, or even a stressful experience, your dog's regular feeding guidelines might leave him with less energy than his body's needs for his strenuous activities. You can adjust meals by adding an extra ounce, or by supplementing with some high calorie treats, a raw egg, edible bones, or bone broth.

Adjusting feeding guidelines depending on activity is common in the winter and summer months too. Summer is full of camping, hiking, and swimming. A few extra calories each day will be appropriately used. Whereas our frigid Canadian winters often limit physical activity, so slightly lower feeding guidelines can prevent packing on those extra winter pounds.



Other Tips

*Remember to stick to small changes at a time. One day of high energy does not justify double portions. Adjustments should be **less than 10% at a time**.*

BREED AND METABOLISM

The calorie-dense nature of raw diets is ideal for the average dog's metabolism, but many breeds are also prone to weight problems. Small breeds are often at a higher risk of obesity because of their lifestyle. They are often indoor dogs and don't always participate in the same physical activities as larger dogs.

RAW FEEDING SAFETY TIPS



There is much debate over the safety of feeding your dog raw meat. We've long been taught that the bacteria in raw meat can be harmful to us, so it's easy to assume the same for your dogs. Knowing the right way to feed raw will ensure that you and your dog will stay safe.

There are bacteria present on raw meat. Scary bacteria like salmonella, E. coli and listeria can be found in different types of raw meat. It's important to keep this in mind when handling any raw meat. A common misconception is that this bacteria will harm our pets when it is ingested. The fact is that your dog's digestive system, acidic stomach environment and fast metabolism are designed to handle this level of bacteria.

All raw meat prepared for our pets should be handled with the same caution we use with our own raw meat preparation.

1. STORE IT PROPERLY FOR RISK PREVENTION

The fact that they can handle bacteria that we can't doesn't mean that they are invincible. Improperly stored or prepared raw diets can still pose a risk to our pets.

REMEMBER THESE TIPS:

- Like the raw meat you prepare for your own meals, it shouldn't be left out for long periods. Exposure to room temperature will allow the bacteria to multiply quickly.
- Even though they can kill and pass these pathogens, if they are present in abundant enough amounts, they can still cause digestive issues.
- Uneaten or future portions of raw dog diets can be stored in the fridge for three days. If you are defrosting multiple meals at once, make sure you only take out what can be consumed within three days.
- The materials that you use to store and feed raw should also be considered. Plastic cracks and scratches easily. Sometimes, these tiny, invisible marks on a bowl or container can host harmful bacteria transferred from the meat. Opt for glass, ceramic, or metal dishes and containers for feeding and storing.
- Raw food should be kept frozen until you are ready to use it. Only defrost what you will be able to store in the fridge and feed in the next two days.



RAW FEEDING SAFETY TIPS

2. WASH YOUR HANDS

A little known fact about pet food is that regardless of format, all pet food can host bacteria that can make us sick. Whether you are touching kibble, treats, or raw, washing your hands and surfaces that the food touches is a best practice to prevent harmful bacteria from affecting you.

The biggest concern with raw is scary bacteria like salmonella and E.coli, both of which should be taken very seriously. How you handle your dog's food is important. Use common sense, and treat their raw food just as you would treat your own raw meat.

3. DISINFECT THE NATURAL WAY

Bowls should be cleaned after every meal, counters and utensils should be sanitized, and any surface or container that touches the food should be disinfected. Disinfecting makes us think of chemicals, but there are natural, pet-safe solutions to eliminate bacteria.

Vinegar is nature's secret disinfectant!

Use vinegar to clean surfaces, floors, bowls, and anything else used in raw feeding. Don't use full-strength vinegar, as that would be overpowering. Instead, use a vinegar and water dilution. 10-15% vinegar to water is suitable for cleaning, and the smell will dissipate quickly.

4. SAFE FEEDING

Some dogs guzzle their food like it's going out of style, but raw meals can be a bit trickier for daintier eaters. Kibbles can be left out for hours, even days, without a second thought, but raw meat should never be left out for more than 30 minutes at a time.

The best method for correcting this behaviour is taking the food away when your dog walks away from the bowl. Store it in the fridge until the next mealtime. Eventually, your dog will get used to eating larger portions at each sitting to provide the calories and nutrition that they require for their daily activities.

5. AVOID PLASTIC BOWLS

As we mentioned above, plastic can scratch easily and create a place for bacteria to hide. Over time, those grooves will be a breeding ground for harmful bacteria.

REMEMBER THESE TIPS:

- Instead, choose metal, glass, or ceramic dog dishes. They are easy to clean and sanitize and will not host bacteria as plastic does.
- Wash your dog bowls after every meal, and sanitize them at least once per week, with a 10% vinegar and water solution. This will kill off any bacteria that has been caked onto the dish.



TRANSITIONING TO RAW DOG FOOD

Making the switch to raw dog food is different for every dog. Some easily swap from one diet to the next with no adverse effects, while others need a slower and softer transition. You understand your dog better than anyone. How your transition should reflect:

- Eating habits
- Sensitivities
- Daily schedule
- Dietary changes
- Current health



Start by determining how much to feed your dog. This will make it easier to be consistent during the transition and track changes and issues in their digestion, appearance, and energy.

Once you've found the food or recipe you want to feed, you'll need to decide how to introduce your dog's new food.

Slower transitions take more time. If your dog is known to have a sensitive stomach, then make sure you will be able to monitor your pet during the change.

There are many different ways to transition your dog to raw food, but here are the three most common methods.



3 COMMON METHODS TO TRANSITION YOUR DOG TO A RAW DIET

01 Cold Turkey

This method is preferred by many pet owners who are comfortable with their dog's digestive health. If you think your dog has an iron stomach or if you've always seen smooth diet transitions in the past, then this method is for you.

It's one easy step. Fast your dog for 12 hours before trying the new diet. We can't guarantee every dog will avoid digestive reactions to this drastic switch, but most dogs usually have little to no reactions. Digestive aids like probiotics or pumpkin and mitigate this.

02 Cautious Approach

For those of you that aren't as trusting of your dog's ability to handle food changes, try to slow-roll the transition. Cut up some of the raw diet into medium to large treat-sized pieces, and feed as treats over 2-3 days.

If your dog seems to be handling the raw pieces well, fast him for 12 hours and replace one meal with raw, keeping the other meal as their original diet. Try to keep the meals 8-10 hours apart.

Once you're sure your dog is digesting the food well, then it's time for a complete switch. Most pets can handle this transition with no issues, but give each step a few days before moving on to monitor stool quality and eating habits.

TRANSITIONING TO RAW DOG FOOD



03 Baby Steps

If your dog has a history of poor digestion or issues when changing diets, you may be considering an even slower transition to reduce the chances of a digestive reaction. You can extend the steps to make smaller changes while you gradually introduce the new diet.

- Start treating your dog with just plain raw meat - ground beef, chicken breast, or whatever protein you intend to introduce into his diet. Remember, baby steps, so start with small pieces and slowly increase the size.
- If your dog tolerates the raw meat well, you can start feeding treat-sized pieces of a full raw diet instead. Do this for a couple of days, or until you are comfortable moving on. Let it sit for about 15 minutes.
- When you are ready, fast your dog for 12 hours, and switch one meal over to raw, for a week, then fully into a complete raw diet. Using digestive aids, like probiotics, pumpkin, tripe, or goat's milk, is a good idea during the transition and for a few weeks after.

Though this method seems like it would help reduce digestive reactions, that's not the case for all dogs. Depending on what type and quality of diet you are switching from, raw may be a difficult change no matter how fast or slow you try to transition them.

Sometimes it's best to rip off the band-aid and deal with the consequences for a day or two. This is why digestive aids can be a lifesaver. They can improve nutrient absorption and reduce the severity of digestive reactions.



A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a black jacket, is smiling and hugging a light-colored dog. The dog is sitting and looking to the right. The background is a blurred green forest.

CHOOSING THE BEST METHOD FOR YOUR DOG

There is no one correct method for transitioning all dogs to raw. The style you choose should be based on your dog's health and your own personal preference.

Nine times out of ten, we recommend the cold turkey method, but special circumstances may warrant a more cautious approach. Connect with your vet to determine the most suitable options for supporting your dog's digestive system during dietary changes.



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