

Veterinary Holistic Healthcare



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NATURAL FOOD DIET

Good nutrition is vital in helping your pet to stay healthy as it provides the building blocks that the body needs to function optimally. After changing to a natural diet many animals show a remarkable improvement in their general wellbeing and often, ongoing health problems can begin to resolve. We recommend that you feed good quality species appropriate raw foods.

Carbohydrates are not a requirement for dogs or cats - many animals react to corn, soy and wheat – these may potentially trigger health issues in some animals.

DOGS:

- Raw meats such as chicken, lamb, tripe (plus other meat protein sources) and organs make up approximately 80% of the diet. All organ meats such as kidneys, liver and heart must be *frozen to minus 10 degrees Celsius, or colder, and kept at that temperature for at least 10 days.*
- RAW egg three times a week (relative to a dog's weight, this would be a suitable amount for a 20-30kg dog)
- RAW chicken necks or RAW marrow bones should be fed as part of a meal daily (Approximately 10-20% of the diet).
- **Optional** 5 - 10% vegetables (and fruit) variety are best. These can be lightly steamed or blended. Green leafy vegetables, pumpkin, kumara are great vegetables to include. Certain vegetables affect digestion, adjust according to animal's needs.
- Broth is also recommended.

CATS:

- 100% good quality raw meat, raw bones and fish, including organ meat (20%)
- Eggs –1 over a week can be included if desired
- RAW chicken wings/necks or whole small fish (sardines etc) 3 times a week to provide bone.

FEEDING A BALANCED DIET IS VITAL, OTHERWISE A GOOD QUALITY COMMERCIAL FOOD OPTION MAY BE A BETTER CHOICE.

WHEN INTRODUCING A NEW DIET THIS IS BEST UNDERTAKEN GRADUALLY OVER A 2 TO 3 WEEK PERIOD.

IMPORTANT POINTERS:

- The amount to feed your pet varies according to their activity level and health status. Dogs' daily requirements are around 2-3% body weight – a 10kg dog should get around 200-300g per day. Cats need around 3-5% (with the 5% for higher activity animals). Monitor your animals body weight and adjust the amount accordingly. (Feed less if they are gaining weight and more if they are losing condition).
- Organic and Free-Range products are preferred.
- Young growing animals need diets that are completely balanced for their individual needs, it is vital that this is done under supervision.
- RAW bones are very important to provide important minerals (especially Calcium) and vitamins as well as help to keep animals teeth clean.
- Eggs should ideally be fed raw to preserve the vitamins and important fatty acids, but eggs in any form are an asset to an animal's diet.

- As part of a balanced diet, a **variety** of organ meats should be around 10% of the meat component of the diet. Heart mince/diced is especially important for cats as it contains high levels of taurine (essential for cats) as well as other valuable nutrients. Taken from prey proportions – relative to eating a prey animal – for example the liver in a rabbit is less than 5% (therefore a mix of organs liver at 5%, kidneys, heart making up the other 15% etc). **Many companies produce premixed products taking the mathematics out of the equation.**
- Essential fatty acid (EFA) supplements are recommended for optimal health. Nordic Fish Oils are a good EFA supplement. In addition, whole green foods such as Spirulina and Chlorella supply valuable minerals and phytonutrients.
- Other supplements may be beneficial to aid various health conditions. Please consult with your holistic veterinarian.
- **FOODS TO AVOID AS THEY ARE POTENTIALLY TOXIC ARE RAISINS, GRAPES, ONIONS, MACADAMIA NUTS AND CHOCOLATE.**

SOME ISSUES TO BE AWARE OF REGARDING THE SAFETY OF FEEDING RAW FOOD ARE:

1. **THE SAFETY OF FEEDING RAW BONES** – these are usually OK as long as the bones are raw (cooked bones splinter) but for those animals that tend to gulp their food down it is recommended that the bones be either too large for them to swallow (they need to be chewed) or that they are crushed into the food. Occasionally some dogs do not tolerate whole bones (for example they may vomit or get constipated/diarrhoea), in these cases the bones may need to be crushed up and introduced into the diet gradually (there are other support strategies which can improve gastrointestinal health and therefore tolerance of bones in the diet – please ask your holistic vet for advice). **ALWAYS SUPERVISE AN ANIMAL EATING BONES.**
2. **BUGS** such as E.coli and Salmonella, should not be a problem if the meat is fresh or frozen. Cats and dogs have a greater tolerance for these organisms compared to humans. **ALWAYS PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE STANDARDS.** Take extra care with raw foods if someone in the household has a compromised immune system, as they could be potentially be more vulnerable to food borne pathogens.
3. **PARASITES** such as sheep measles are killed after freezing raw meat/offal at -10 degrees Celsius for 10 days.

SOME FURTHER POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND:

- Heat destroys many nutrients contained in raw food.
- Certain animals may benefit from a poached meal depending on their health status and constitution – this needs veterinary guidance. (NEVER COOK BONE)
- Feeding a raw diet is simple, yet it is, important that certain guidelines are adhered to, to prevent diet drift and possible imbalances over time.

RECOMMENDED FOOD STOCKISTS:

Not all raw foods available for animals are a good quality product. It's important to buy high quality and reputable products. Raw Essentials and Prey Foods provide a free consultation around dietary advice – please follow their recommendations to get your animal onto a balanced raw food diet plan.

- Raw Essentials – www.rawessentials.co.nz 'including raw feeding advice and support'.
- Prey Foods - <https://www.preypetfood.nz/> 'including raw feeding advice and support'.
- K9 Naturals and Feline Naturals – www.k9natural.co.nz