

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.

DOGS:

- 50 – 70 % good quality raw meat – chicken, lamb, fish.
- RAW egg three times a week.
- RAW chicken necks or RAW marrow bones should be fed at least 3 times a week as well as 1/5th organ meat (kidneys, liver (COOK OFFAL)).
- 30% vegetables (and fruit) variety is best. These can be lightly steamed or blended. Green leafy vegetables, carrots, pumpkin, kumera are great vegetables to include.

Carbohydrates such as pasta, rice (brown, ideally), quinoa may be used to bulk up the food BUT are not essential. Many dogs do not need gluten, soy or corn in their diets as these can trigger health related issues in some animals.

CATS:

- 90% good quality raw meat, fish and eggs
- Organ meat (20%) of the meat can be included
- RAW chicken wings/necks or whole small fish (sardines etc) 3 times a week to provide bone.
- 10% vegetables, steamed, mashed and mixed with the meat

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. It is usually 2-3 % of the animals' bodyweight daily. i.e. a 5kg cat or dog should get 100-150g per day. 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, otherwise a good quality commercial option may be a better choice for the first 9 - 12 months.
- RAW bones are very important to provide important minerals (especially Calcium) and vitamins as well as help to keep animals teeth clean. PTO for more information on the risks associated with feeding bones.
- Egg yolk should ideally be fed raw to preserve the vitamins and important fatty acids, but eggs in any form are a valuable asset to an animal's diet.

- As part of a balanced diet, organ meats such as liver and kidney should be fed at a ratio of 20% 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.
- High quality vitamin, mineral and essential fatty acid (EFA) supplements are recommended for optimal health. A good all-rounder is 'My Beau' which is high in vitamins and EFAs. 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 e.g. Glucosamine for arthritis, co-enzyme Q10 for heart conditions, etc.
- **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 bones (they can vomit), in these cases the bones may need to be crushed up and introduced into the diet gradually. Over time the tolerance should improve.
2. **BUGS** can with bugs such as E.coli and Salmonella, which 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 hydatids, sheep measles are killed after freezing raw meat at -10 degrees Celsius for 7 days. It is illegal to feed raw offal to dogs, please cook offal when feeding dogs.

SOME FURTHER POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND:

- Heat destroys vitamins and antioxidants contained in raw food.
- Certain animals may benefit from a likely cooked meal depending on their health status and constitution.

LET FOOD BE YOUR MEDICINE!

RECOMMENDED FOOD STOCKISTS:

Not all meat available for animals is a good quality product. It's important to buy high quality and reputable products.

- Raw Essentials – www.rawessentials.co.nz 'including raw feeding advice and support'.
- K9 Naturals and Feline Naturals – www.k9natural.co.nz
- Ziwi Pets – www.ziwiPets.com 'peak nutrition without compromise'

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