

Why Feed Raw Pet Food?

By Doug Knueven, DVM

Author of *The Holistic Health Guide: Natural Care for the Whole Dog*

The answer to the above question can be found by answering another simple question, “Who is smarter, Mother Nature or us?” Now, I want to be clear that I have the utmost respect for veterinary nutritionists and professionals who are often involved with formulating commercial, processed pet foods. However, I think Mother Nature is smarter than even these nutritional experts.

To say that processed pet foods are “complete and balanced” assumes that we have complete knowledge of nutrition. Considering the discovery of “new” nutrients on a weekly basis, this is obviously not the case.

Commercial pet foods are made of ingredients that dogs and cats were never meant to eat such as grains, synthetic vitamins, artificial flavors and colors, and chemical preservatives. These ingredients are then processed at high temperature and pressure which destroys more natural nutrients and creates carcinogens (cancer-causing agents).

Dogs and cats have evolved over five million years eating what their current wild counterparts eat. Look at the wolf. He eats wild game (the entire carcass including meat, bones, organs, and intestinal contents) plus some select vegetation. The wolf does not eat a significant amount of grain, nor does he cook his food.

To formulate a nutritious diet for pets, it makes the most sense to start with what Mother Nature intended our little carnivores to eat – raw meat, bones, organs and shredded vegetables. There are books giving directions on how to make such a BARF (Bones And Raw Food) diet. You need to be sure to do it right.

Another way to provide your pet with a nutritious, raw diet is to purchase a commercially made, natural, raw diet. These diets provide calcium in the form of bones (which is the preferred form) without the slight choking hazard that whole, raw bones can cause. Also, commercial raw foods are usually frozen to temperatures so low that most disease causing bacteria and parasites found in raw meat are killed.

It is impossible to make a cheap pet food with quality ingredients. Given the importance of good nutrition to a pet’s health, it makes sense (and cents – as in savings in veterinary bills) to feed your pet a high quality pet food. Raw pet food is the nutrition Mother Nature intended for our pets.

For more information on natural nutrition and general holistic health for dogs read Dr. Doug’s new book, *The Holistic Health Guide: Natural Care for the Whole Dog*, available in book stores, pet shops and on line.

