

Feed Your Dog Raw Safely

If you decide to go the raw route for your dog's diet, remember: Safety first!

Liz Palika

A raw food diet can be wonderful for many dogs. Proponents say this is a more natural diet; more like wild dogs and the ancestors of today's dogs would eat. The vast majority of dogs eating a raw food diet look the picture of health, with shiny coats, lots of energy for work and play, and with clean teeth.

However, raw meats can cause some problems for your dog. Both wild and domestic meat animals can carry diseases and parasites so it's very important that you know where the meat that you feed to your dog is coming from. Although your dog's immune system may be able to handle the contaminants, if his immune system is stressed in any way he could end up getting sick.

Bacterial contamination is also very common in slaughterhouses and raw meats containing salmonella or E. coli are often shipped out to distributors. When the meat is thoroughly cooked, these bacteria are killed, but if the meat is fed raw, then your dog may end up very sick. Although raw food proponents state that the dog's digestive tract can handle these bacteria, again, that is assuming his immune system is working at its best. Far too many veterinarians have treated dogs with bacterial infections that came from eating raw meats.

The best source for raw meats is a local butcher who is procuring meat animals from known local sources. Ideally he should know how the animals have been fed and cared for, and you can see that his butchering practices and facilities are clean.

Then, once you buy the meats, keep them cool on the way home and get them into the refrigerator or freezer right away. Clean the cutting board, knives and other utensils before and after using them with a bleach solution and wash your hands often. Wash the dog bowls after the dogs have eaten.

A raw food diet definitely takes more time and preparation than feeding your dog a dry kibble food. Just keep safety in mind.

Author info: Liz Palika is an award winning author with more than 55 books to her credit. For more on Liz's work, go to www.lizpalika.com.

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