



Feeding Philosophies

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FEEDING RAW PET FOOD DIETS

Although raw meat diets are popular among some pet owners, there is no scientific evidence that they provide any specific health benefits other than being highly digestible. In fact, raw pet food diets may present several major health risks.



Key Messages

- Raw meats, poultry and fish, including those intended for human consumption, can be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria such as *Salmonella* or *E. coli*. These bacteria can be harmful to the pet, and the human members of the family could also be at risk. Studies show that household levels of these disease-causing bacteria are higher when pets are fed raw foods rather than regular commercial pet foods.
- Bones present in raw food diets may also harm the pet, potentially resulting in teeth or mouth injuries, choking, and gastrointestinal obstruction or perforation.
- Commercially available diets marketed as “complete” raw diets can provide the correct balance of nutrients for a dog or cat, but many do not. Home-prepared raw food diets may also not provide complete and balanced nutrition. The effects of feeding a nutritionally imbalanced diet are not always immediately evident, but the consequences can be lifelong for the pet including stunted growth and reproductive problems.

Additional Resources

Freeman, L. M., Chandler, M. L., Hamper, B. A., & Weeth, L. P. (2013). Current knowledge about the risks and benefits of raw meat-based diets for dogs and cats. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 243, 1549–1558. doi: 10.2460/javma.243.11.1549

Lenz, J., Joffe, D., Kauffman, M., Zhang, Y., & Lejeune, J. (2009). Perceptions, practices and consequences associated with foodborne pathogens and the feeding of raw meat to dogs. *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 50, 637–643.

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.