

Hi there new raw feeder!

Save the money you're spending on supplements, yogurt and what you're planning to spend on a grinder and use it to buy good ole raw meat 'n bones!

That's pretty much all your dog needs to be healthy.

Giselle's recommendations to start raw feeding:

1. You'll want to start with 2-3% of your dog's ESTIMATED IDEAL ADULT weight. Tweak with more meat if your dog gets a bit skinny, a bit less if your dog gets "fluffy" over the space of a few weeks. You might start out by weighing your dog, and weighing her meals; but most people don't continue once they get more comfortable and casual about feeding raw. Tiny, toy, pregnant, puppies or very active dogs might need as much as 4-5% or more - very large, giant, overweight or couch potato dogs might need less than 2% to maintain.
2. Ditch the kibble or canned, there's been plenty of discussion on this list about why processed foods and raw don't mix; just let it suffice that your dog can reap the benefits of raw faster and more completely if you donate the kibble to your local shelter asap. A species appropriate raw whole prey model diet doesn't include kibble. Or veggies, grains or tons of supplements. Or, for the most part, ground meats. No need for w/rec/k bones either. And, your dog may be less motivated to make the change if he can smell that kibble!
3. Offer at least 2 meals a day to start with. (three meals for a pup under 6 months old or for tiny dogs) Feeding once a day (or even less often) can be a great feeding plan for a dog, but not at first; too much new food at a meal can cause digestive upset. Feed as large a portion as you can for the size of the meal. No little pieces or cut up, "bite sized" chunks. Dogs need to tear into their food and shear hunks off to swallow and crunch bone for physical, mental and dental health. They don't chew or eat the way we do, their digestion begins in their stomachs, not in their mouths. So swallowing big hunks of meat and bone is fine. If it fits, it's OK. If it isn't happy in the stomach, the dog will hork it up, and re eat it, so it will go down and stay down the 2nd or 3rd time. Its all good, that's the way dogs are.
4. Feed a little less at each meal at first than you think you should. Too much new food over the course of a day or two can cause digestive upset, too. Some dogs are, or learn to be, self-regulators. That means, no matter how much food you offer them, or how often, they will only eat as much as they need. You might just want to offer them fattier portions of meat (meat pork, tongue, beef or veal heart with the cap fat left on, some trim) more often, after they get used to eating raw. Just be sure your new-to-raw dog knows that what you are serving is real food, then, leave him to decide. OTOH, some dogs never get full! "Know thy Dog" is the motto that applies here.
5. Stay with one new protein for at least a week, maybe two. You want the dog to be showing you that he is well adjusted to the new protein before adding in new stuff. Take it slow; add only one new protein every week or two.
6. You can switch to a new protein by just serving it at the next meal, and all the meals after that for a week or so, or you can add a bite or two of the new protein in with the "old" protein, gradually adding more new and less "old" over several days, until you are feeding all new and no "old". Whatever works for your own dog.
7. Boneless meals tend to produce loose, even runny poops. A judicious amount of bone in a newbie dog's meal will tend to firm things up. There will be less poop overall; raw is much more digestible and less goes to waste. Poops will be less frequent also, for the same reason. Bone adds bulk, so sloppy poops can be firmed up by some (don't go overboard!) bone at each meal at first. Too much bone and your dog can get "fossil" poops that are dry, whitish and crumbly.
8. Chicken is recommended as the first protein to be introduced for several reasons: its cheap, easy to obtain, easy to cut into different dog meal sized portions, you can trim visible fat and skin if you need to tweak, most dogs will eat it and its pretty bland. Read the labels on the chicken before you buy; don't get any that say it's enhanced with flavoring/seasonings or salt injected. Some dogs get itchy or vomit or get true diarrhea from enhancements. Whole chickens are the best to start with. Cut into portion sizes with kitchen shears, as needed.

9. Some newbie dogs vomit or poop bone bits. There is an adjustment period, so you want some bone in most meals at first, but too much bone may not be digested and the dog will just hork it up or poop it out. No problem, it's just the dog's way of saying "Too much right now, no thanks."
10. Some dogs will get the Bile Vomits or Bone Bile Vomits (BV or BBV) when new to raw simply because their schedules or routines of eating have been changed. When a dog adjusts to raw, his gastric "juices" become much more acid, to better digest the raw meat and bone. If he's expecting a meal at a certain time, the "juices start flowing" in anticipation of getting a meal. When the meal doesn't happen, the dog often will hork up the yellowish, foamyish bile, with or without bones. Sometimes they hork up BBV because raw digests faster than kibble, the tummy is empty, so it must be time to eat. NP for the dog, he's gotten rid of the irritation. He may react as if he feels bad, just because you are upset that he did it on your new comforter, or on the white carpet.
11. A lot of dogs don't drink as much water or as frequently when switched to all raw, all the time. Raw has a pretty high water content and most dogs are forced by dry as dust kibble to over drink water to compensate in order for their bodies to process it. If only fed raw, you don't need to coax your dog to drink more water or even broth, just offer plenty of fresh water, he'll drink when he needs it.
12. True diarrhea is not just loose, runny or sloppy poops. It is frequent, liquid or watery explosions of poo that a dog cannot "hold back". True diarrhea, in my opinion, is caused by disease, parasites or inappropriate food or non food items. The occasional loose poops, even over a few days, from feeding a few too many boneless meals or introducing a new protein or feeding too much organ at one whack, is not diarrhea.
13. The general rule of thumb for feeding raw is: 80% meat (muscle, fat, skin, connective tissue) 10% EDIBLE bone (not all bone that is served must be consumed) and 10% organs (5% of this is liver, the rest is as much variety as you can find and afford) This is not an immutable "daily requirement". Balance Over Time, over weeks and months is one of the raw feeding mottos. ;) If you feed true whole prey, that is; entire animals at a time, then the meat to bone to organ ratios are "perfect" for that creature. Whatever parts your dog can eat of is right for him. In the wild, wolves will eat off a large animal carcass for days, and each wolf gets different parts. If times are hard, they will consume the entire critter, including skin, fur, less "choice" parts and will even crack the hard long bones to get to the marrow. If pickin's are plentiful, they will eat the easiest and choice parts, and then move on. Because of variances in size, age, personality, life experiences and dental ability, a particular dog will be able to consume, or not: all or part or some or a little bone from any particular animal. If you feed "Frankenprey", that is; a variety of protein, body parts and organs from different animals, to simulate the whole prey experience for your dogs, you are challenged to find enough variety in all these aspects for optimal health.
14. Organs - don't try to add a lot of organs or organ variety at first. An easy way to satisfy the human need to "Do it all, right now!", is to toss the gizzards and heart you get with your whole chickens in with a bonier meal, a little piece at a meal. Heart and gizzards are organs, but should be fed as meaty meat. The liver can be cut up into teensy bits, and fed a tiny bit at a time with a meal. This will allow you to feed organs, but shouldn't cause runny stools. If it does, cut it out and freeze those parts for later down the line. My list of organs, so I don't forget to look for variety; liver, heart (fed as meat), cheek meat, head meat, salivary glands, feet, lips, oxtail, spleen, tongue (usually fed as meat), weasand meat (esophagus), tripe, stomach, sweetbread (thymus & pancreas), ears, kidneys, brain, tripe, poultry giblets - heart, liver, gizzard and snouts. Heads, with all the "stuff", including eyes. "offal" - viscera and trimmings of a butchered animal often considered inedible by humans.
15. SEBP - Slippery Elm Bark Powder. This is a good innocuous herb that soothes the stomach and digestive system. If you feel you need to intervene when your dog has loose poops or constipation, this is the way to go. SEBP is "used to treat diarrhea, constipation, enteritis, colitis & irritations of the stomach. Used to soothe, protect & lubricate mucous membranes. Also, used to relieve the discomforts of kennel cough & other types of bronchitis."

<http://fiascofarm.com/herbs/supplements.htm>

I use 1 tsp of SEBP to one ounce of ground or chopped chicken. Mix together and shape enough meatballs for several days doses, and freeze them. They thaw quickly. For small dogs, divide in ½ ounce meatballs, for large to giant dogs, 1 ounce meatballs. Feed 1 with each meal. Or, fast for a day, (not for pups, fast for just a meal or two) offer plenty of water. Feed SEBP meatballs 3-4 times throughout the day. Feed smaller, more frequent meals for several days after, gradually increasing the meals and decreasing the SEBP meatballs. You will often see an increase in mucousy poops with SEBP, this is part of the way it soothes the digestive system, and the dog's body will do the same sometimes even without SEBP.

16. You can feed pretty much any animal or animal part that your dog will eat and that won't break the bank. :) Common grocery store variety suffices for some; chicken, turkey, pork, beef, lamb, fish, rabbit. Others can obtain at a reasonable price and feed; goat, venison, emu, ostrich, bison, beefalo, elk, mutton, mice, rats, guinea hen, quail, bear (bear? ;-)), the list goes on and on.
17. If you must supplement, you can add Salmon or Fish Body oil, either in caps or liquid. Make sure it doesn't have any plant based oils, like soy, in there. You probably don't need much. Follow the recommendations that come with the product you buy:

<http://timberwolforganics.com/pet-omega-oils>

http://www.icelandpure.com/salmon_oil.htm

http://www.grizzlypetproducts.com/salmon_oil/salmon_oil.html

In the case of true disease, you may need certain supplements, but this is the exception to the rule, most dogs don't.

18. **Lis' List;** ways to creatively source cheaper variety in protein, parts and organs. FreeCycle and craigslist are great ways to find a free or cheap freezer to hold all the scores you'll be making!

*** Where do you look for meat suppliers?**

- a. Look up meat and poultry packers, processors, and distributors in the yellow pages. You may be able to get great prices from them if you order in bulk, and/or they may have a discount outlet that is open to the public.
- b. I get many of my best deals in Asian/Oriental markets. I've also heard that Hispanic and Caribbean markets have great variety and prices too.
- c. You may be able to join a barter group.
- d. Google breeders (i.e. rabbit, goat, lamb, etc.) who are in your geographic area. They may have culls they want to get rid of, or lower prices overall.
- e. Look up bulk suppliers and frozen bulk foods in your yellow pages.
- f. If you have a Chinatown nearby, definitely make a visit.
- g. Let your friends, relatives, and neighbors know you want any freezer burn or old meat when they clean out their freezers, and tell them to pass the word along.
- h. If you belong to a church or social group, tell those members to mention it to their friends and relatives as well.
- i. See if there are any co-ops or meat buying groups near you. Check on Yahoo, or Google to see.
- j. Try craigslist - it's amazing what you can get for free or cheap.
- k. And I get meat and fish all the time (for free) through FreeCycle. Join multiple lists if there are a few close by.
- l. Some Walmarts and some Costcos and some Sam's Clubs have good deals, but you may want to make sure it's not seasoned meat.
- m. Definitely watch the flyers, and you can usually see the rest of the flyers online (the ones that don't get delivered to your house, but are only a short drive away).
- n. *** Hands down, the bulk of my best deals have been marked down meat at regular grocery stores. They reduce it the day before it is going to expire, and I go as early as I can to get it before it is gone.
- o. Tell friends and relatives who hunt and fish that you want first dibs on any body parts they don't. You can probably get at least the organs and maybe the head. Also ask them to put you in touch with their other friends who hunt and fish.

- p. A great tip I learned here a while back some restaurants throw out things they don't use, like the organs that come inside whole poultry, or raw meat that falls on the floor. See if they'll save them for you. Find somebody who knows somebody who works there.
 - q. Farmer's markets are great, but pick and choose carefully for the best bargains. And sometimes at the end of the day some vendors will reduce their prices, because they don't want to take it back with them.
 - r. Some people contact taxidermists, who have no use for the meat.
 - s. Find people on this list from your vicinity, and ask them where they get their meat deals. Join raw feeding lists (there are many), and ask if there are other raw feeders in your area.
 - t. Tell your butcher you want the meat that they would normally throw out, that is almost out of date, that people ordered and didn't pick up, stuff that was dropped on the floor, their freezer cleanouts, and parts that don't sell (like trachea, lungs, spleen, etc.). Some butchers will save their trim for you (once they get to know you). Build a relationship with them first.
 - u. Yes, roadkill works too (where it is legal). In some places you can get your name on the list and get called when they have large roadkill. (like deer)
 - v. You can raise your own meat/poultry if you have the room.
 - w. Post a message in Carnivore Feed-Supplier or CFS-Canada if you are in North America:
<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/CarnivoreFeed-Supplier/>
<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/CFS-Canada/>
 - x. Speak to local farmers.
 - y. Also, look for heart, tongue, and gizzards, which count as meat (as opposed to organ) in the world of raw feeding, but are often cheaper than other muscle meats.
 - z. Find somebody who knows somebody who works at the grocery store. They can introduce you to the meat guy, who may become more willing to save stuff for you or reduce items about to expire, once they know you.
 - aa. Check the internet. Some suppliers have affordable prices, even after shipping costs are calculated.
19. Don't hover! It takes some dogs a couple of days to realize that what you're giving them is real food, and they're allowed to eat it. This process will take less time if you're not standing over them in an excess of anxiety. Some dogs react to that kind of anxiety by acting as if they don't want the food, when in reality; they are just confused by your mixed signals. Remember, "people food" has always been off limits to him prior to this! Take the food to his feeding place, put it on an old towel or rug and have a seat. Don't stare, but do hang out, reading a magazine until he's done and you can let him outside and fold up his towel.

It really isn't that hard to raw feed your dog. There's a learning curve, definitely. But, that's what the RawFeeding list is there for. You can join it at <http://www.yahogroups.com/group/rawfeeding> Read as many daily posts as you can, read the files on the website, and follow those links! Search in the archives for past posts with keywords; new to raw, newbie, help, how do I start or other words that reflect your specific search.

TC, and let us know how you and your dog progress!

By: Giselle with Bea in New Jersey & Lis
Based on posts to the RawFeeding list
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