

Raw Food Feeding

There has been much focus recently on raw feeding your dog. Having undertaken our own research, we conclude that we are **unable to endorse it** and have the following observations to make:

Why some people feed raw food:

- The perception that it is more 'natural' and 'less processed' – therefore it must be healthier.
- Dogs with dietary intolerances appear to do better on raw food than a commercial diet that may have contained grains, for example.
- Feeding bones can help with oral hygiene.

Our reasons for not recommending it:

- There is no strong evidence from any studies available to show that raw is better than a good quality dog food. Most importantly, there are no long-term studies and as such the effects of life-time raw feeding are as yet unknown.
- Advisors from veterinary societies (World Small Animal Veterinary Association - WSAVA, British Veterinary Association – BVA and Action against medical accidents - AvMA) have examined the evidence and all recommend against feeding raw food diets.
- Studies have been undertaken to demonstrate that, even with the provision of a 'balanced' raw diet, it was difficult to produce a diet sufficient in required micro-minerals.
- There is an increased incidence of intestinal worms, which worryingly can cause disease in children.
- There is a proven increased risk of serious food poisoning from **Salmonella** and **Campylobacter** in children of families of raw-fed dogs, immunosuppressed people and the dogs themselves, especially if they are immunosuppressed from illness or medication.
- Feeding a raw diet is particularly dangerous in puppies with the potential to create serious developmental problems.

- Raw feeding is not appropriate for animals with kidney disease due to high protein content.
- Good food hygiene is not enough - dogs have raw food bacteria on and around the face and mouth, at the least, let alone where and what they rub their face on after a meal.
- Food quality is not guaranteed – there is an enormous variation in the type and quality of RAW diets available, just as there is with commercially prepared diets.
- So many owners do not feed a truly balanced diet. This is down to poor research, poor advice, fussy dogs etc.
- Bones – chewing can be a very calming natural behaviour for dogs. Chewing on large hard bones can also be beneficial for oral hygiene. However, teeth can get broken. In addition, smaller or softer bones can cause life-threatening intestinal obstructions or perforations.

What's a good alternative to raw feeding?

- There are lots of good quality diets out there, created by highly qualified veterinary nutritionists. These foods are consistently nutritionally balanced.
- All dogs have different needs, but we can help! Some dogs that do better on raw food might also do well on a well-balanced hypoallergenic diet, for example.

Raw feeding

If after considering all the above carefully, you are still going to feed raw food:

- Please do your research and work hard to feed a balanced diet.
- Ensure you worm your dog monthly.
- Supplement the diet with a quality vitamin/mineral supplement.
- Clean your dog's face thoroughly after they have eaten.
- Anyone that handles your dog in any way, should be told that they are raw fed.

If you would like to discuss pet nutrition further, please contact us on 01202 698899.

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