

Are you making appropriate fresh, whole & raw food choices for your pet?

Balance. What is important?

Dogs & cats have different dietary requirements than people. With faster growth and shorter life spans, it is incredibly important that we provide them with the proper amount and ratio of nutrients in all of their meals. This is especially important for puppies & kittens who have very specific calcium requirements that are essential for proper growth.

Adding some fresh foods from your own grocery list to your pet's bowl can be fine. Just keep it simple, and keep in mind that veterinary nutritionists recommend at least 90% of the foods in your pet's bowl are complete & balanced. So if your add-on foods are high in calories, keep the portion sizes small. Stick to whole, fresh foods with no added sodium and always avoid grapes, raisins, onions & chocolate.



Safety. What about salmonella?

All pet food manufacturers (raw and cooked foods alike) are required to follow the FDA and FSMA guidance which includes a zero-tolerance policy for pathogens including salmonella, e. coli, & listeria. Foods that are not compliant and are found to be contaminated can be recalled.

When purchasing a commercial raw product, whether frozen or freeze dried, call your manufacturer or check their website for their pathogen control and testing policies. Manufacturers should be able to tell you how each product is tracked, treated, and tested to ensure that it is safe for you and your pets. High pressure processing (HPP) is a gentle and commonly used cold water technique approved for use in human and pet foods to ensure safety while preserving quality and taste. Laboratory testing is efficient, accurate, and accessible and can be added to any manufacturer's food safety plan to ensure cleanliness prior to sale.

Home-Prepared Diets:

If you are making your own pet food, there is a risk of salmonella and other food-borne pathogens on meats found at the grocery store if they are not properly cooked. These types of bacteria can make a dog or a cat sick. They can also survive in a pet's mouth or feces and have the potential to be transferred to humans in the home – most especially those who are very young, old, or immune-compromised.

Creating a complete & balanced diet at home is a challenge and should be taken seriously. Even with a varied, meat-first, fresh food diet, several important nutrients including but not limited to zinc, vitamin E, and calcium are often deficient. Home-prepared diets should follow the NRC guidelines to meet your pet's specific nutrient requirements, and we recommend they be formulated by a professional to ensure proper balance & digestibility.

Raw bones have variable digestibility, and if swallowed in large enough pieces do have the potential to cause blockages or punctures in the intestine. Concerned raw feeders should consider supplementing calcium another way – grind the raw bone or purchase a product that has already been ground. Chewing on raw bones is not required for a healthy mouth – a balanced, moisture-rich diet plus regular brushing & dental care is!

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR RAW OR FRESH FOOD MANUFACTURER:

- Does the food have an AAFCO statement that includes your pet's life stage?
- How does the manufacturer ensure AAFCO requirements are being met?
- How many calories per unit is the food, and what is the serving size for your pet?
- What is the pathogen control policy & does the manufacturer test final product to ensure safety?

