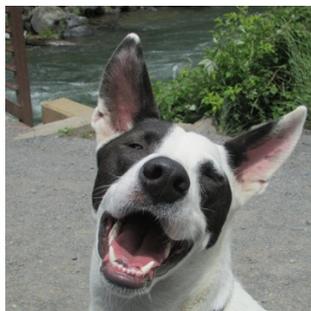

RAW FEEDING GUIDELINES – ADULT DOGS

Congratulations! Choosing to feed your dog a non-processed diet is a great way of boosting their health and wellbeing – and hopefully keep you away from the dreaded V.E.T! Science is now showing how important diet is to our pets, and that fresh food feeding can actually change the way their cells work at the genetic level! However, as with any new thing, change can be scary, and so I have written this document to try and give you some of the basic information and hopefully make you more confident moving forward.



FOOD HYGIENE

In order to protect both our own health, as well as that of our pets, we need to always consider food hygiene when dealing with raw food, especially meat products. Always be sure to follow the points below and use common sense – if the food doesn't look or smell right then don't feed it to your pet!

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after preparing your pet's food
- Wash food bowls after each meal with hot soapy water, or use the dishwasher
- If your pet likes to take their bones etc out of the bowl, ensure that there are in an area you can sterilise afterwards – carpet isn't good from this perspective!
- Clean all surfaces and utensils immediately after food preparation
- Don't wash meat products under the tap – this just sprays bacteria around your kitchen and does not help clean the meat!
- Always wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before feeding to remove traces of chemicals, toxins or infectious agents.
- Store raw meat at the bottom of the fridge, away from ready to eat products, and ensure it is well packaged. Ideally use a separate fridge/freezer for pet food only.
- Only use food products fit for human consumption – these will have been checked for obvious disease or contamination prior to sale and in general will be of a higher quality than those labelled as 'pet food only'.
- If you choose to feed meat that you have caught or hunted, keep in mind these animals may be carrying parasites or other diseases. Ideally freeze hunted meat for 1 month and fish for 24 hours to before feeding to kill off any nasties.

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HOW MUCH TO FEED?

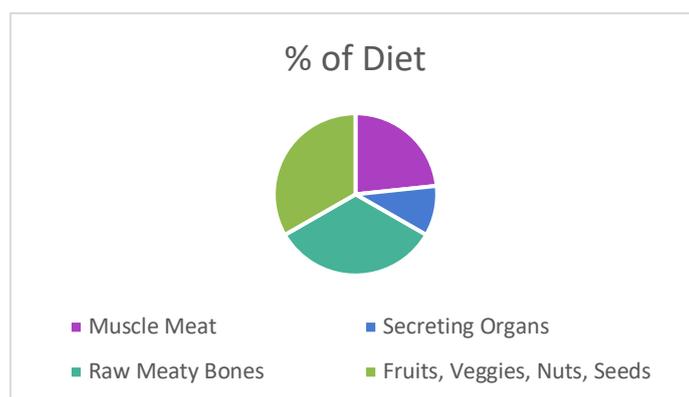
The first thing to say here is that EVERY DOG IS DIFFERENT. Just like with ourselves, some animals will burn through food faster than others, depending on their lifestyle and their own metabolism. This means you may need to tweak the amount if your dog starts to put on, or lose weight. However, as a broad guideline I generally suggest people aim to feed 2.5% of their dog's bodyweight daily. As an example, for a 25kg dog, we would do the following...

$$\text{DAILY REQUIREMENT} = (2.5/100) \times 25 = 0.625\text{kg} = 625\text{g of food per day}$$

Many people choose to split this daily allowance into 2 feeds to keep the dog going throughout the day, but this again will be dog (and owner) dependent!

NOTE that puppies, sick or very active dogs may need more than the amounts above – speak to your vet to discuss feeding these pets

WHAT GOES IN THE BOWL?



MUSCLE MEAT = 23.3% TOTAL BOWL (MIN)

This is what you'd consider your bog standard 'meat' – minced beef, salmon steaks, chicken breasts – basically just the actual meat and no bone. We also include things like heart and lung in this section too, since they provide similar nutrients to those in the muscle meat.

SECRETING ORGANS = 10% TOTAL DIET (MAX)

The organs are basically our big vitamin and mineral source. Liver is the richest, but should be limited to 5% of the total diet. Other organs you can use are things like pancreas, testicles and kidneys.

RAW MEATY BONES = 33.3% TOTAL DIET

There is a lot of controversy over giving dogs bones, but the key thing to remember is that as long as you are careful and use the right types of bone, the risks are low, whilst the benefits are huge! Dental health is one thing that definitely benefits from bone feeding as the bones act as little toothbrushes. Bone in the diet is essential for the

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calcium and phosphorus it contains – both of these are vital for your dog's skeleton, muscles and organ function so if you are feeding raw then bone is an essential ingredient. Here are my rules for bone feeding:

- Always remember to only feed raw bone – cooking the bones makes them more brittle and more likely to splinter and cause problems in the dog's guts.
- Avoid weight bearing bones of large mammals – so leg bones or spines of cows, sheep or kangaroo for example. This is because these bones are very dense and strong (they have to be to hold up the cow!) and therefore can be more likely to fracture your dog's teeth – a painful (and expensive!) problem.
- Avoid processed bones like those you find wrapped in plastic in the pet shop – the processing treatment can contain harmful chemicals AND make these bones more likely to splinter
- Always monitor your dog when they have a bone and remove it if it gets too small, splinters or is not eaten within a few hours
- Choose size appropriate bones for your dog. A chihuahua will only be able to manage maybe a little chicken wing whilst a Great Dane will have no trouble with an emu neck! If you put the bone horizontally across the dog's snout, it should stick out a couple of centimetres either side.
- Consider using whole carcasses such as salmon frames or chicken frames if your dog is a gulper of individual bones.
- If bones are just too scary, or your dog has a particular reason for not being able to eat them, use ground up bones instead – most butchers will do this for you (especially with chicken frames) or buy a premade mince with bone added in.

FRUITS, VEGGIES, NUTS AND SEEDS

Whilst we know that in the wild dogs mostly consume prey animals they kill, the guts of those prey animals generally contain a large amount of plant material. In addition, wolves are known to enjoy eating berries, and will seek out particular plants to eat depending on their own physiological needs at the time. This means that we need to give our pet dogs some of the green stuff as part of their diet.

- Avoid onions, grapes (including sultanas & raisins), raw potato, avocado skin and macadamia nuts.
- In general most dogs will digest plant material better if it is chopped first, then cooked or fermented as this breaks down the tough plant cell walls and allows the gut to better process the food. In some cases it can also activate health giving nutrients in the plant.
- Great veggies include leafy greens, tomatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin/squash, carrots, broccoli, zucchini, peas, beans and beetroot.
- Great fruits include blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, apples, pears, peaches and plums
- Add in mushrooms – these fungi contain a wide variety of nutrients not available in plants, many of which have health benefitting properties
- Keep nuts to a small amount only and toast them first – sprinkle a teaspoon only into the bowl
- Use seeds or seed oils – pumpkin seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds and pre-soaked chia seeds are all brilliant
- Don't forget the herbs and spices – many culinary herbs have health boosting effects – but make sure you check first if they are pet safe!

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WHAT ABOUT BALANCE?

The guidelines above are designed to provide a general level of balance for the average dog. Balance doesn't need to be provided in each bowl, but it is worth making sure they get it over the course of about a week. Some owners choose to, for example, feed a bone in the morning, and the meat/organs/veggies in the evening – it simply depends on your dog and your own preferences. Will every meal, or even every week be totally perfect – probably not, but then how many of our own diets are perfectly balanced? I know my own isn't! The key is to provide variety in your dog's diet, if you do this then you will more than likely tick all the boxes over time. Switching out chicken meat for beef for a few days, or changing the organ you include from kidney to testicle will help ensure that a wide variety of nutrients including the key vitamins and minerals are available to your dog to use as they need to. People keen on feeding commercial foods will say they are completely balanced so vitamin/mineral deficiencies are not an issue. I do need to point out that nutrient allowance guidelines for pets are not brilliant – many nutrients (including many plant derived ones) are ignored completely, and many of the recommended daily allowances are based on minimal research. There are many articles written on this topic so please ask if you'd like further information on this and I can help with your particular concern.

WHAT ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS?

Really this is a whole other article, but I'll just drop in below the things that I personally feel are worth adding into your dog's diet on a regular basis. This is generally to fill in any gaps we may end up with as a result of food ingredient quality or availability.

- Probiotics – there are many now available on the market, some with pre-biotics (bug food) and some without. The key is to always use a product designed for dogs, since their gut bacteria are different to our own, and human versions can contain toxic additives. Most are in powder form that you just mix into the rest of the food. Examples include Digesticare and CEN digestive +. There is also a dental support probiotic called 'Teef' which is designed to add to the animal's drinking water to prevent the growth of harmful plaque forming bacteria in the mouth.
- Omega 3 – most diets are lacking in omega 3's which are highly beneficial fats with an anti-inflammatory role in the body. The product I use by choice is Antinol Rapid, because it has a good number of scientific studies behind it, and behind the individual ingredients too. It contains specially formulated Krill oil and Green Lipped Mussel and comes in capsule form. In animals that can't tolerate seafood then I'll use a flaxseed oil from CEN. This can also be used in horses too, and comes in a large container so can be a good option for owners with multiple pets.
- Brown Algae (*A. nodosum*) – this is a great dental health supplement and source of iodine as well. Multiple studies show that this little algae stops plaque sticking to the teeth, thus reducing the risk of tartar formation and gingivitis. It is now available as a powder and as a chew treat, so should be easy to get into your pup on a daily basis.



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WHAT IF I HAVE A PUPPY, OR A DOG WITH MEDICAL PROBLEMS?

Puppies can absolutely be fed a raw diet from weaning, but care needs to be taken to ensure the nutrient levels are suitably balanced. This is particularly important in large breed dogs, since bone deformities can result if the calcium/phosphorus levels are not correct, or the dog grows too quickly. Similarly, in dog's with particular medical conditions such as diabetes, allergies, kidney disease etc, then some special tweaks are going to be needed to their diet. Speak to a veterinarian (like me!) or a qualified canine nutritionist for advice on feeding puppies or dogs with problems – it's better to ask questions at the start to make sure you end up with the best food for your pet!

I WANT TO FEED RAW/FRESH BUT HAVE ZERO TIME – WHAT CAN I DO?

This is something I totally identify with – often organising myself to feed my kids is hard enough let alone cooking stuff for the dogs as well! Luckily there are now a plethora of options available to help us in our crazy modern lives..

- Batch cooking – pick a day each month when you make up a massive batch of dinners for the dog, then freeze them up so that all you need to do on a daily basis is lift one out of the freezer to defrost.
- Premade Raw – there are now so many of these available and many can be delivered to your door every week! Always make sure that the company you are buying from use suitable ingredients, and that they work with a veterinarian or canine nutritionist when formulating their meals. Personally I like the Prime 100 SPD Raw pre-made dinners, but take a look at what is available near you!
- Cooked Rolls – the high quality cooked rolls, such as those made by Balanced Life and Prime 100 are a great option to have in for the busy days. They are not raw BUT are considerably better than dry food as they contain more protein and are only minimally processed. I use these and the dogs love them!
- Kibble with added fresh food – If you're not able to go to completely raw or fresh food for your dog, then just do what you can! Any fresh food in the diet is a win, so consider reducing the dry food by say 20% and adding in some meat, veg or fruit. If you are choosing to feed kibble, then get the best quality you can such as the Prime 100 SPD range or the increasing number of ranges that contain freeze dried raw meat in with the kibble pieces. *Note that Royal Canin and Hills products are NOT high quality and I do not recommend using them*. If you are doing some kibble, then an Omega 3 supplement is essential, since all kibble diets are low in this key nutrient.

OK I WANT TO DO THIS BUT HOW DO I START?

Here are my golden rules for starting fresh feeding...

- Read this document...then read it again...
- Explore what is available in your area – if you are in SE Queensland then get in touch and I'll point you in the right direction of some excellent suppliers.
- Join a Fresh feeding online support group – there are many, but if you are in Australia then I recommend the group run by The Balanced Canine (link on my Facebook page) as a good place to start
- If you're stuck then ask for help! Speak to your vet, or if your vet doesn't support raw or fresh feeding then give me a call and I'll help you out!

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