



## DACA Exclusive Article.

### Raw Diet Q & A with Mixie

**Q. What is a raw diet? What is the difference between a raw diet and BARF? Is there any part of raw diet that is cooked?**

**A.** That's a really great question to start with. In my point of view, "raw diet" is literally translated- uncooked food that my dog eats. Whenever I'm discussing raw diets for dogs, I am always speaking from the platform of promoting a prey model raw diet. More on that later. In a broader scope, there are as many "raw diets" out there as there are kibble foods, if not more, since each

individual usually tailors them to suit the needs of their own home pack.

Most "raw diets" usually contain some element of mixing, blending, weighing, measuring, supplements, veggies, this and that. The BARF ("Bones And Raw Foods" or "Biologically Appropriate Raw Food") is the topmost example of this. The main meat source in a BARF diet, as I recall (and the current advice may be different, I haven't done any research into the BARF diet in years), is chicken backs. A large percentage of the BARF diet comes ( continue. on pg 2

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## Raw Diet Q & A continued from page 1...

from a veggie blend with an obscene amount of supplements. I think it's silly, to put it nicely. Dogs are carnivores, and as such, need no real veggies in their diet. Chicken backs contain something like 50% bone matter adult dogs need about 15%. Also, if the BARF fed dogs were getting the meat and organ meats their bodies need, they wouldn't need such heavy supplementation.

I'm a huge fan of the K.I.S.S. school of thought. Prey model raw fits this perfectly. Broadly speaking, the idea is to replicate as closely as possible the diet a wild canid would eat with what we have available to us. Let's start by dispelling a basic myth. Dogs are not omnivores. Dogs, like the wolves they are evolved from, are carnivores. They are opportunistic carnivores, for sure, but still carnivores. Try to picture a wolf munching on an ear of corn. Pretty silly, isn't it? It's not much of a stretch dogs really are wolves in different skins. Genetically, they're wolves. Taxonomically, they're wolves. Physiologically, they're wolves with a more refined appearance. Okay, and personality... in most cases. They need meat, bones, and organ meats, and that's pretty much it. I never weigh anything but my dog, occasionally. I never mix anything but a margarita. I never blend, chop, or measure anything for my dog aside from breaking things down into meal sized chunks measured by eyeball. Prey model raw is just about as simple and straightforward as it gets. Dogs need a diet consisting of approximately 70-80% meat, 10-20% bone, and 10% "other stuff" which is largely organ meats, but can include raw eggs, veggies, treats, whatever else your dogs need, want, or enjoy. That's it. Aim for those percentages

averaged out over a period of days, weeks, or the month and you'll do just fine.

As far as cooking goes, a raw diet is just that, raw. Not only is cooked meat less readily digestible, cooked bones are downright dangerous, and should never be fed under any circumstances.

**Q. Dogs aren't wolves. They've evolved for ten thousand years in captivity.**

**A.** Evolutionary changes happen over millennia, and they happen due to pressure to survive from predators or environmental changes. One might argue that an animal would eventually adapt to the diet it's forced to survive upon, but there's no pressure to evolve in the case of domestic dogs, since we medicate and coddle and do any number of things to ensure our pets survive. There has been a great decline in lifespan and general health, particularly when it comes to geriatric dogs, over the half-century or so that kibble foods have become popular. Selective breeding for physical or behavioral changes has no effect on the way their digestive system works and the way their bodies process food. Sure, there are visible differences between dogs and wolves, but the set of the ears and tail and frequency of heat cycles and styles of coats and changes in head shapes don't change the fact that dogs' teeth are not flat, grinding molars appropriate for processing grains, nor are their stomach systems multi-chambered ruminant systems, nor are they able to produce digestive enzymes appropriate for the breaking down of vegetation. A few thousand years of selective breeding is a blink of an eye in evolutionary terms, and does not make a carnivore into an herbivore, or even an omnivore... and neither

does the convenience or pocketbook of the owner.

Pariah dogs have made a living for thousands of years on the scraps of human consumption. To put it another way, they'll survive, but that doesn't mean they'll thrive. Sure, they can digest grains, but then they develop skin allergies, yeasty ears and toes, dull and excessively shedding coats, plaque-covered teeth, and age much more quickly than they should. Ever notice that Iams considers a "senior dog" to be six years old? Apologies all around, but I can't even imagine placing a six year old dog into the "old dog" category.

**Q. Okay, so dogs are wolves. Where is a wolf going to get chicken or turkey or pork?**

**A.** I don't in any way believe that you have to be feeding wild game and native wild grasses and whatever to make for a healthy dog, the same way I don't believe I need to eat a Paleolithic diet to be a healthy person. Ideally, sure... realistically, not so much. Grocery store chicken sucks, for sure, but until I can find a permanent source of wild venison, it's the best I can do. I also should point out that I keep using the word chicken, but it's really not a good idea to base the diet around chicken as a staple. It's a good starter food, and it's perfect for upping bone content when necessary, but since the vast majority of a wolf's diet is made up of ungulates, I try to feed a lot of red meat.

Even still, I gotta say, a diet based mostly around grocery store meats and organ meats with supplements is still going to be a far sight better than a kibble diet, which is typically low-grade chicken (cont. On pg. 6.)

## Raw Diet Q & A continued from page 2...

and grains and supplements. This thing doesn't have to be any more complicated than someone wants to make it--even minimal effort is going to get you better nutrition than you can find in a bag of dry food. A diet of ground beef is not going to work, obviously, but hit those ideal ratios even with factory farmed meat, feed a good amount of organ meats, and you're still going to be doing better than kibble. If you have the time, energy, and resources and can go a step or two beyond then it only gets better from there.

### **Q. Does a prey model raw diet include vegetables?**

A. Short answer: Nope.

Long story: Dogs, like the wolves they are evolved from, are carnivores. The idea of the dog as omnivore is a fairly recent concept and, if you'll forgive the cynicism, has a lot to do with the dog food industry. Dogs, like wolves, do not have the jaw structure, dentition, digestive structure, or digestive enzymes necessary to properly digest and extract nutrients from either grains or veggies. So why feed something the dog isn't evolved to eat? We don't feed hamburger to our horses.

Even longer story:

Jaw structure: Dogs' jaws, as well as wolves, are designed with a musculature that only allows for up and down movement, rather than side to side. This is because they're used for ripping and chomping things into manageable size, rather than for painstakingly grinding raw grains and grasses. Herbivores and omnivores spend a lot of time pre-digesting this stuff in the mouth by the extensive chewing action and enzymes in our saliva. Dogs cannot do this.

Dentition: Take a look into your dogs' mouths--they have ripping, shearing teeth, rather than flat, grinding molars. That is because they are designed to tear quickly through a carcass and crush bone into chunks small enough to fit down their throats, not spend a lot of time grinding raw grains. Also remember that, in the wild, no one is around to cook for a wolf, so biologically appropriate foods will never be cooked.

Digestive structure: Dogs' digestive systems are very short and highly acidic. As such, they are evolved to digest raw meat and bone extremely efficiently. They have roughly a third the length of intestine, relatively, that people have. They do not have the time or the length of intestine (between when the food enters the gut and when it, uh, leaves) to properly break down carbohydrates OR vegetative matter. This also means that they need very little dietary fiber to keep things moving properly along. We humans need loads of the stuff, otherwise things get backed up--it's a long road. For a dog, however, most of what they need is found in bone, in the cellulose therein, or in the fur and feathers of prey animals. Grains and veggies are largely useless to dogs. Remember also that the ungulates and lagomorphs who spend most of their time eating roughage have either a complex stomach system that requires re-chewing of a cud to aid digestion, or they're cecal fermentors. Either way, they're specially designed to eat the stuff. Dogs have none of these adaptations.

Digestive enzymes: dogs lack the two digestive enzymes, amylase and cellulase, necessary to properly break down and digest veggies. They have to be mechanically "digested" by blending them, for a dog to be able to extract anything out of them. Now, why would nature, in all her wisdom, create an animal dependant on a blender for

survival? I'll bet you can guess what my answer is ;0). Furthermore, roughly none of our domesticated veggies will be available to a wild canid, so if I were going to feed any green stuff, I'd go grab a handful of wild grasses and offer that, rather than blending some broccoli. While it's true that factory farmed meats are depleted of some nutrients, I choose to make up for this by feeding some salmon oil here and there, rather than blending up veggies that most dogs won't eat without being coerced anyway.

More on veggies: wolves do not spend much of their time harvesting veggies to eat. They are opportunists, to be sure, and scavengers, but most of the plant matter they'd eat would be overripe, fallen fruits in season, or berries, and a few wild grasses here and there. But anything they eat would be seasonal, for sure, and my (semi-scientific) guess is that this has much to do with the fact that fruit, particularly overripe, fallen fruits, are very sweet. This doesn't mean the fruits are biologically necessary, but it may mean that wolves appreciate a sweet snack, just like dogs and people do. Either case, I won't stop my pup from munching on fallen plums, or grazing on grasses if he wants, but I also won't comprise his diet largely of pureed veggies.

The sum total of all this is that, no, dogs do not need veggies in their diets to be healthy. Some people feel and find that their dogs do better with a measure of green stuff, and that's fine at the end of the day (and the article) my advice will always culminate in the idea that neither I nor anyone else dispensing advice long distance has seen or lived with or fed your dog, and only (continued on page 7)

## Raw Diet Q& A Continued from page 3...

you know what works best for your pack.

**Q. But wait a minute, wolves get their veggies from the stomach contents of their food!**

A. No, they don't. This myth has been long ago dispelled by the work of pre-eminent wolf biologist L. David Mech, who has observed wild wolves opening the gut of their prey, as well as those who work in wolf and wolf-hybrid sanctuaries wolves will open the gut, remove the stomach, shake out the contents, and eat the stomach itself. I don't blame them, a sludge of vegetative matter and stomach acid probably tastes pretty awful. Wolves and thus our dogs are at the top of the food chain. They get their veggies by eating the animals that eat veggies.

**Q. When did you switch to raw? What helped you make that decision? What improvement did you see?**

A. I started feeding raw the day I brought home my dogo puppy, only a year and a half ago. Kibble food has never made sense to me, so for me, the decision was a no-brainer. The first time I read an article on raw food, it was like a light went on a definite "duh" moment. Hard to compare improvements, since he was essentially fed raw food from day one. One of the bright and shiny highlights is that his teething stage was non-existent, since he worked out those little toothies on his food, instead of our furniture. Improvements are visible every time I see him standing next to a kibble fed dog, and people comment on him all the time. Mostly, they ask why he's in such good shape, and why he doesn't smell like a dog. It's funny other raw feeders will come up to us on the street or in the park and ask us if we feed raw, the difference is that visible. You'll start to see the layer of fat most dogs,

even many very active working dogs, carry around under their skin due to all the sugars in the high levels of carbohydrates in dry food. You won't have to spend big bucks on preventative dentistry. You won't have to clean quite so much fur off your clothes. You'll have pups that happily chew their food instead of expensive objects.

If you think about it, it's odd that we have to think of this subject in terms of promoting the "benefits" of real food, instead of turning an eye to the negative effects of a lifetime on a heavily processed, inappropriate diet.

**Q. What are the health benefits to raw?**

A. They are too numerous to list, really. The basics are easy to see clean teeth, soft, healthy skin, shiny, clean-smelling coats that shed far less, the joy of never having to express an anal gland again...

The best answer I can provide is another question: how often does someone tell YOU to eat more heavily processed, pre-packaged food for better health? The health benefits are huge and far ranging, and way beyond the scope of this article.

**Q. Any known allergies to raw?**

A. Chicken is the most common food allergen, I'm told. I don't know of many dogs who have allergies to raw food, although the raw diet is the perfect system for discovering and eliminating food allergens from the diet. It's so easy to start out with one food, and gradually add in others, watching for reactions. With a kibble food, it's a crapshoot as to what's in it that's causing the reaction, and you have zero control over the amounts and ratios of ingredients or the quality of food. Additionally, there are sneaky ingredients that can cause problems,

such as grains leading to yeasty ears and toes, or flax oil causing itchy skin.

**Q. Are there dietary supplements you have to add to a dog's diet that is being fed raw?**

A. Well, that depends on what you're feeding. Best case scenario, grass-fed or wild game food sources and you wouldn't need to supplement anything, ever. For me, that's not always feasible, so since a good portion of my pup's diet is made up of factory-farmed meats, I feel more comfy giving him some fish body oil or salmon oil now and then to make up for the woeful lack of omega 3's in factory farmed, grain fed meats. I also give him a glucosamine & chondroitin supplement when I don't have any cartilaginous foods on hand. When I've got foods high in cartilage content, I don't bother supplementing with anything but the salmon oil. I don't even consider that a supplement, though, just another food, albeit one I feed in very small amounts. In a diet consisting of adequate amounts of raw red meat, bones, and organ meats, you'll be giving your dogs better nutrition than can ever be found in a bag of kibble. Be careful with the vitamin supplements, and with the organ meats as well. It's certainly possible to over-supplement and cause vitamin toxicity with certain fat-soluble vitamins.

**Q. Kibble helps keep a dog's teeth clean - how do you clean a raw fed dog's teeth?**

A. I don't allow him to clean them himself by getting plenty of  
(continued on Page 8)

## Raw Diet Q &amp; A continued from page 4...

I promise that if you ever took a peek into a raw-fed dog's mouth, you'd think he visited your dentist that morning. My vet knows I feed raw and still does a double-take every time she looks at his pearly choppers.

The lack of chopping and grinding is essential to this, though. Dogs who eat ground or small chunks of food never really need to chew, and thus won't have their teeth naturally cleaned. One of the lovely incidental benefits of a prey model raw diet is clean teeth and (relatively) sweet breath.

**Q. I hear stories about contaminated meat from stores being recalled can this harm my dog and how do I avoid feeding my dog contaminated meat? Can dogs get salmonella from raw chicken and eggs? I have read mixed things. What about trichinosis from raw pork?**

A. Your dog doesn't have the same concerns over bacteria that you do. The smellier, slimier, oddly-colored, the better, in his opinion. The foods we feed are nearly sterile compared to the foods a wild canid would eat. The parasite and bacteria load our dogs face eating the diet I'm describing is, for all intents and purposes, non-existent. Dogs and wolves are opportunists and will scavenge the nastiest stuff. Their digestive system is very short and powerful. Bacteria really don't have time to multiply and are nuked in short order by the highly acidic environment, anyway. In short, a healthy dog with a normal immune system has nothing to worry about from bacteria in raw meat. Trich has been largely eradicated in the US through better feed control, and meat sold for human consumption shouldn't be a concern at all. Wild pork may be a different story, and as always, any concern can be

eradicated by freezing your meet for a week or two before feeding.

**Q. Is this safe for pups under 6 months old, with their still developing immune systems?**

A. Absolutely!! In fact, I'd venture to say that it's far, far more important for very young pups to be getting the best possible nutrition in those early, critical growth periods.

**Q. How does this work for outside dogs? Anything left behind would draw ants faster than kibble...or is this primarily for indoor dogs?**

A. It's true, it draws flies as well. I'd always advise feeding just the right amount. Once you figure out the amount your dogs eat every day, you'll be pretty hard put to find much left behind.

**Q. Are there parasite problems with the raw diet? Should the dogs be kept on a worming regimen?**

A. No more so than any other dogs. It's a whole lot more helpful to keep an eye out for symptoms of parasites and treat them if it comes up. I've yet to ever have any reason to be concerned, and if your meat is frozen for any length of time, it'll kill off any parasite there is to be concerned about, anyway.



**Q. What's the average cost, compared to high quality kibble? Do you have any suggestions on keeping the cost of raw feeding down? For example, who might you contact for better deals on meat or bones?**

A. I almost never pay more than a dollar a pound for dog food, unless it's a rare treat. I get much of it free or dirt cheap. The more creative and resourceful you are, the more likely you'll be able to find good resources for very cheap or free scrap meat. Some areas have great resources available in the way of raw food buying co-ops.

Some good sources are (in no particular order): grocery stores (keep an eye on expiration dates and snatch them up as they're marked down and about to expire), meat processing plants, butcher shops, friends who hunt and fish, local farmers, local game processors, co-ops, fisherman's markets, friends cleaning out their freezers... spend any amount of time on this, and lose all shame, and you'll find opportunities everywhere ;0).

Green tripe is really only available in two sources, as I've been able to find them. It's not legal for meat processing plants to handle it in any way at all, or to let you handle it yourself. One source is to either have animals butchered yourself, or hook up with local farmers who butcher on site. I've got a few farmers who call me when they're doing a butchering, and I'll come out and fill bags with all the exciting leftover bits: mostly organ meats, hide, legs (for chew toys, off young goats and sheep), and TRIPE! Smelly, but worth it. Just don't forget your gloves.

The other, much less ikky source, is greentripe.com Mary provides a wonderful product and provides lots of cartilage as well for healthy hips.

## Raw Diet Q &amp; A Continued from page 5...

**Q. Do you think that any behavioral issues are caused or alleviated by raw feeding? For example: The "blood-aggression link" myth...**

A. This one always brings up a wry smile when someone asks. It just makes so little sense to me. I never could work out why someone would believe that a dog would ever make a connection with a chicken quarter in their food bowl and a toddler... because there just isn't one. I don't know about anyone else, but I don't release live goats in the yard and let the dog chase them down. We've had the discussion about livestock, and we have solidified the understanding in his large noggin that his short life would flash across his eyes should he ever take it upon himself to chase domestic animals. Your dog's level of aggression is based entirely on genetics, socialization, and training. Good nutrition can only benefit..



**Q. Do you have any research to back up any of this?**

A. There are no stats or studies, so

far as I know, other than taking a look at the diet wolves have eaten since the beginning of, uh, wolfdom, along with a basic knowledge of canine physiology. Pardon the cynacism, but who's going to fund it? Hill's? There's plenty of research available on wolf diets, and I'm pretty comfy with that.

**Q. What do you suggest new Raw feeders tell their vet? What about when the vet begins with the horror stories? Any good websites to print out and take?**

A. I suggest people take it on a case-by-case basis. I wouldn't take my dogs to a vet that didn't know everything about their health history, or to a vet who refused to consider the possibility that you don't need to get food from a bag of kibble to be healthy. On the other hand, sometimes you've only got one vet in town and have to work with what you've got.

The best thing you can do is to educate yourself and be firm and clear with your reasoning. Why do you believe this is the best way to feed? Be ready to defend your decision if needs be. In all honesty, many, many vets are anti-raw for a variety of reasons. The largest is due to the fact that the nutrition education that vets get is largely funded by Hill's and Nestle (producers of Science Diet and Alpo)... I'll leave the math up to you. Also, many vets have a lot of exasperation with clients who jump into what they see as a "fad" diet with little or no forethought, and are feeding diets of nothing but raw hamburger. This can, it should be easy to see, cause huge health problems very quickly.

I had a very, very long conversation with my vet when we first met. At first she was vehemently anti-raw, but when I was able to answer every concern with logic and factual information, and show her that I've you know actually thought

about this, she's fine with it. It's hard to answer the logic of a diet comprised of fresh, healthy foods, and I truly appreciate a vet who's willing to listen to their clients. In turn, I expect her to tell me if what I'm saying doesn't make sense, and to back it up with facts if it doesn't. I am always, always willing to listen and learn and adapt my knowledge with new information. Plus, when it comes right down to it, what makes more sense? Feeding your dog a diet consisting mostly of corn or rice, with some heavily cooked meat and a ton of supplements... or a diet of fresh meat, bone, and organ meats?



**Q. Should I feed part kibble and part raw?**

A. If you feel more comfortable that way, then go for it. I figure any addition of raw food to a kibble diet can only be an improvement. I don't do it just because I see no need to do so--no kibble is ever going to be as good for your dogs as fresh, whole foods, so why mix the two?  
(Continued on page 10)

## Raw Diet Q &amp; A continued from page 6...

I see so many people saying they're afraid of not giving their dogs adequate nutrition with the raw food they're feeding, so they supplement with kibble... to me, that's like saying you'll supplement your diet with fast food, just in case... seems silly to me. But if you're worried about the process or just don't want to go to the trouble of putting together a diet for your dog, then by all means supplement your kibble with raw. Just don't feed both at the same time.



**Q. I've heard that dogs can get sick on raw diets when they are first changed to raw? Is this true and what do you do about it?**

A. Often you'll have a few exciting days of runny butts. There are a few ways to combat this. Easiest way to go about it is to get a bottle of slippery elm capsules from your local health food store and give your pup a few with each meal. Start slowly, boneless chicken for a few days to give your pooch a chance to get his digestive power up to scratch, then bone-in chicken

for a few days, then phase in one new meat at a time gradually. Eventually you'll have a dog with a Gut o'Steel.



**Q. Can you give me an in depth description of preparation process, as well as weaning the dog off kibble toward raw, since some people are just thinking it's okay to go "cold turkey," and having lots of stomach issues because of it.**

A. Preparation of a meal? Hack off a chunk roughly the size of two hands put together, toss to the dog. Palm-sized bits for the cats. Whole mice for the snakes. End of feeding time ;0). As far as the weaning process goes, "cold turkey" is exactly what I'd recommend. I can't come up with a good enough reason to feed one more day of kibble, really. See above for the weaning process. It's actually better for the stomach to pull the kibble entirely than to mix the two. Kibble takes forever to digest and tends to hold the raw food in the gut, promoting bacteria development and causing barfing pups

**Q. Kibble bags say how much to**

**feed a dog - how much raw do you feed a dog? What's the average amount required to maintain good health broken down by months through first year, how about senior citizens?**

A. Enough to keep him or her at a healthy weight. The actual amount will vary according to your dog's age and activity level. Very young pups need up to 10% of their total body weight, adults need about 2-3%, senior citizens may need even less. Assume a 100 pound dog will need around two pounds daily, more or less. A ten week old, 20 pound puppy eating 10% of his body weight will need about the same, around two pounds, see?

My dogo at ten weeks ate around a pound and a half of food, and he eats about the same today, on average, at a year and a half. I'm much more concerned about my dog's weight and condition if he's looking a little ribby, then I up his food intake, if he's looking a bit pudgy, I cut him back. Remember that I never weigh or measure anything, and all amounts are estimated. I am much more likely to feed a big chicken quarter, or half a beef heart cut, or one kidney, measurements like that, than "a pound and a half".



## Continued from page 7...

**Q. Which form of meat is best? Chicken? Beef? Pork?**

A. Any and all of them. No source is really better than any other. I tend to aim more for red meats than poultry because they're better sources of omega 3's and 6's.

**Q. I've always heard chicken bones were bad for dogs, what truth is there to this? Is it an old wives tale?**

A. No truth whatsoever, in the discussion of raw bones. Cooked bones of any kind are extremely dangerous and can and do splinter, causing intestinal perforations and other Very Bad Things.

**Q. Are there any foods to be avoided?**

A. Mainly the dense, weight bearing bones of large ungulates the femurs that are so often sold as "soup bones," or "knuckle bones," they're extremely hard and will easily crack your dog's teeth. As mentioned above, wild caught Pacific Northwest salmonids should be deep frozen for two weeks or avoided entirely. Wild pork should be deep frozen as well. Lists of toxic plants can easily be found online. The ones I remember offhand are members of the nightshade family, raisins and grapes, onions... the internet is going to be a much better source for this, as I never feed veggies, so I don't remember many offhand.

**Q. I am afraid of choking hazards when feeding raw, what can I feed my dog to avoid this? Should I cut the meat up?**

A. Nope, let your dog do all the work. Larger pieces are FAR less likely to pose a choking hazard, since they'll tend to force her to slow down and crush it up, rather than attempting to gulp it whole.

The only incidents I've heard of dogs choking due to raw food nearly all involved large dogs and small pieces such as chicken necks, wings, or turkey necks. If it's small enough to fit down their throator if they THINK it's small enough to fit down their throat, they'll try to swallow it right down. Give your pooch a piece of food half the size of his head and there's no way he'll try to swallow it whole.

**Q. How much meat should be on the bones? I've read that chicken backs and necks and similar bony pieces are best, but I've also read that ground beef and chicken leg 1/4's, and meaty pieces are best. What's the right answer?**

A. As always, the answer is to refer back to the golden ratio: approximately 70-80% meat, 10-20% bone, and 10% "other stuff". None of these numbers need to be hit at every meal, every time. Often I'll feed days of just boneless meat, and then meals of chicken backs or other similarly bony bits.

Chicken backs are probably around 50% bone. The animal in the wild with the highest meat to bone ratio is the elephant at 3:1, or 25%. I promise, not too many wild canids are taking down elephants. Prey animals, from moose and deer on down to rabbits and mice, average around 15%--mice are as little as 10%, rabbits even lower, about 8%, and larger ungulates such as deer are between fifteen and twenty, faulty memory notwithstanding. Additionally, some of the heaviest, densest bones in the ungulate skeleton, the weight bearing leg bones, and the skull, are not consumed, bringing the total consumable bone structure down a

little closer to 15% or less. Thus, I feed a diet roughly 10-20% bone, more for a very young pup, less for an older dog. His diet also consists of about 70-80% meat, and 10% other stuff, which includes organ meats (liver, kidney, heart, green tripe, whatever I can get my hands on), raw eggs, and a statistically insignificant amount of whatever I happen to be cooking for dinner. A green bean. A slice of apple. Etc. These are proportions found in the game that wild canids eat.

**Q. Do you recommend feeding meat frozen or thawed?**

A. I feed almost everything completely thawed. The exception is green tripe if I can feed it half-thawed, it tends to be less stinky. Some people will feed partially frozen food to encourage a "gulper" to chew more thoroughly.

**Q. Should I trim fat off raw meat? Chicken skin?**

A. No, no, no. Animal fats are extremely necessary to a carnivore's physical and mental health. There are studies that show animal fat helps release serotonin in a dog's brain, promoting calmness and decreasing aggression.

**Q. Can I feed raw fish heads and bones? If so, frozen or thawed? Is cooked, canned fish okay? If so, which types?**

A. The only fish that I'm aware of to be leery about is wild salmonids from the Pacific Northwest. They can carry a fluke that causes a disease known as "salmon poisoning". I feed Northwest salmon all the time, I'm just careful to deep freeze everything for two weeks, first. Cooked, canned fish is okay in a pinch, mackerel is the best, but it's A) cooked and B) very high in salt



## Continued from page 8...

content, so I don't feed it unless I'm really having a hard time finding raw fish at a reasonable price to feed my pets.

**Q. Is there really any benefit to feeding a dog crushed eggshells?**

A. Not unless he's got so few teeth, or they're in such bad condition that he can no longer eat bone matter. You'd be surprised, though, I have a friend with to ancient chihuahua who have maybe five teeth between them, who still valiantly gum down those chicken wings like champs.

Sometimes my dog will eat the eggshells, and sometimes not. More often, he cracks open the egg, slurps out the contents, and leaves the shells all over my back porch, though.

**Q. How about yogurt/cottage cheese?**

A. Unnecessary overall, it might be helpful to feed cultured acidophilus yogurt if you're having digestive issues, or cottage cheese if your dogs are sick. No animals are evolved to eat dairy, and humans are really the only animals who do so on a regular basis. It probably won't hurt, but isn't necessary.

**Q. I am worried that while feeding the raw diet, that my children are likely to receive a case of salmonella poisoning. Is there any truth to this? Should I worry about the dog licking my kids after eating?**

A. I recommend not allowing the dog to eat a smelly chicken and then immediately stick his tongue in your kids' mouths. I try to avoid this myself.

Dogs have mildly anti-bacterial saliva. I avoid slurps and kisses for a little while immediately after eating, but it's nothing that crosses my mind to be of much concern. I'd keep kids away from the feeding area immediately after feeding, and swab it down with a

mild bleach or white vinegar solution if you feed directly on the floor.

Normal sanitation is pretty much all you need, here.

**Q. How do you contain the mess with indoor or outdoor feeding?**

A. I don't have many problems with mess. I feed everything on linoleum, and give it a swab with a bleach solution once in a while. My dog knows he is not to pick up the food and walk away with it. The cats quickly learned that we strictly defend their food as long as they stay in their feeding area, but it's fair game for the dog if they try to run off with it. I feed outdoors when the weather is good. Really sloppy stuff gets fed in a bowl on the lawn.

**Q. How do you feel about the theory that a fast day (no food) is good for dogs? If you agree, how often?**

A. Now that he's a year and a half, we're fasting him once in a while. Dogs (and wolves) are built to gorge and fast rather than smaller, frequent meals. I try to replicate that with random big meals and tiny meals and a fast about once a week or every ten days. As always, this sort of thing is fairly random with us. Wild canids don't eat on a strict schedule, and I don't think my dog needs to, either. We haven't been doing it long enough to notice a specific benefit or drawback, but I'm told by other raw feeders, working dog folks that their dogs seem "sharper" and more focused, and have more energy with an occasional fast.

**Q. Is there a recipe book I can get on raw diets?**

A. Aiming for those key percentages and feeding a decent variety are really the only "recipes" you need. There aren't many books available on prey model raw, the only one I'm

aware of Dr. Lonsdale with his Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health, although I believe it's mostly about why NOT to feed kibble, as opposed to how to feed raw. Come to that, there's really not much you need to know, so it's pretty easily summarized in just a few pages.

**Q. Troubleshooting:**

**Help! My dog has diarrhea!**

A. Is it really diarrhea? If your dog is sick, take thee straight to a vet, no questions asked. If your dogs' stools are just loose and messy and inconvenient, but he's obviously in no distress or feeling ill, then you may just not be feeding enough bone content. The right stool consistency (and trust me, you'll become more an expert on your dogs' output than you ever thought you'd be...) is firm and fairly hard, and will turn white and powdery fairly quickly if left on the lawn.

There won't be much of it, either. Watch the liver too lots of liver will turn into a runny butt very quickly.

**Q. Ack, now he's constipated.**

A. Remember that liver? If you're feeding too much bone, and your dog is straining to go, just up the organ meats and boneless meals. Liver is a quick fix.

**Q. He won't eat beef, and really only eats chicken happily.**

A. I have never met a healthy dog that would voluntarily starve himself. I can almost guarantee that if you hold out and keep offering that beef meal after meal, putting it down, and picking it back up after ten minutes and putting it back in the fridge until dinner, at some point he's going to realize you mean it, and he'll eat. Dogs are smart, and they're opportunists. They'll learn how to work the system very quickly if they snub one thing and

## Continued from page 9...

...and get offered another.

The same advice goes for dogs who snub the raw food and hold out for the kibble. Keep offering it, they'll figure it out.

**Q. For the really ambitious:  
What about setting up a raw  
feeding co-op?**

As with any product, the more buying power you have, the better prices you'll be able to negotiate, and the better quality meat you'll be able to get. If you can get people to buy

together, you can arrange to buy whole lambs, hogs, and cows and split them up. I have zero experience arranging such an ongoing thing, and if it gets big it can become a lot of serious work. Anyone considering it should contact the SoCal BARF co-op, they're a truly incredible resource and might be able to give you more info on how to go about it.

Take this advice for what it's worth. I'm not an expert and never claim to

to be. I love to hear feedback on what works for other people and their packs. The bottom line is always this: do what works best for you and your pack, whether that's prey model raw or Ol' Roy... or anything in between.

~Mixie

\*Interested in seeing the Lab work done on Mixie's dog to back up the health benefits of feeding raw?  
[Http://www.dogo.org/raw\\_results.htm](http://www.dogo.org/raw_results.htm)