



Feed your dog the natural way by Richard Allport, diet'dog's consultant vet

“The number of dogs being fed on a **raw natural diet** is increasing rapidly. More and more people who are looking for natural ways to keep dogs fit and healthy realise that good health starts with good nutrition, and that usually means a diet based on raw meat and bones.

Dogs are carnivores and scavengers. Their preferred diet is animal prey, but they will eat almost anything else they come across. Including the contents of your waste bin in many cases! But to stay really well and have strong immune systems the very best diet for dogs, in my experience, consists of raw meat, raw offal, raw bones and crushed vegetables. Most dogs that change to this diet show improved skin condition, have better digestion (with smaller, less smelly stools) and suffer fewer diseases and infections.

There are several companies that produce ready-made, frozen, minced raw foods for dogs. These are already balanced in nutrients, which makes it easier than making up your own. Naturally they are more expensive than home prepared raw food – but they are quicker and easier to use.

Do you need to add any other supplements to a healthy raw food diet? Although most dogs can be changed to a raw food diet without any problems, I find that for the first few weeks a supplement of **Digestive Complex** is helpful – this contains herbs, minerals and vitamins that help promote normal digestion and also support the liver and pancreas as they are

adapting to the change in diet. It's also useful to give **Digestive Complex** at any time when there is a significant change in the ingredients of the diet, or after any illness involving the liver, pancreas, gall bladder or intestines.

Another supplement I advise giving, and giving regularly, is **Intestinal Hygiene Control**. Given for five days, followed by another five day course a month later, this blend of active herbs cleanses the digestive tract, and is especially useful for dogs who are prone to worms and other intestinal parasites. I recommend giving this course twice a year. Although dogs on a raw food diet seem less prone to acquiring parasites than dogs on processed diets, the more help the better!

Raw fed dogs are definitely less likely to get chronic, persistent or recurrent digestive problems such as colitis and gastritis. But dogs are scavengers, and the best fed dogs will sometimes decide to ingest more than a morsel or two of something they really shouldn't (old crusts of bread, fox droppings, dead birds – whatever they come across!). This can lead to temporary deviation from a perfect digestion (in other words, diarrhoea!) and in these circumstances **Digest Bioactive** is the ideal supplement. It contains prebiotics, probiotics, digestive enzymes and Montmorillonite and Bentonite clays which together absorb toxins, firm up the stool consistency, and help return the state of the bowel lining to normal and restore natural bacterial balance. This product is also beneficial during and after a course of antibiotics, and in any other situation where digestive balance has been compromised.

Growing puppies and pregnant and lactating mothers can be fed on a raw meaty bone based diet just as adult dogs. My own dog began her raw food diet from the day she was weaned as a very young puppy, and her mother was raw fed all her life. I do advise giving pregnant and lactating mothers, and puppies up to the age of about nine months, **Gestation and Growth**. This contains herbs, vitamins and minerals which help enhance healthy growth in puppies and promote a healthy pregnancy and optimum milk production in their mothers. Minerals such as Zinc, which can occasionally be a little low in raw food diets, and Calcium, needed for strong bones and nutritious mother's milk, are among the many beneficial ingredients of **Gestation and Growth**.

Another supplement I often recommend, especially if dogs are going through stress, or are recovering from illness or surgery is **D-Dog Superfoods**. This is a supplement that is high in green superfoods like Spirulina and Chlorella, as well as a wide range of vitamins and minerals that support the immune system. It also includes probiotics and montmorillonite clay to help detox and improve digestive tract health after antibiotics or other drugs have been administered. **D-Dog Superfoods beta** is a companion supplement that contains similar ingredients but has extra beta carotene, which gives it stronger anti-oxidant properties, and particularly helps improve coat pigmentation and colour.

Finally, **Go Away! Fleas and Ticks** is a useful supplement to give as a natural flea and tick repellent. I suggest adding this product to your dog's food (for ten days each month) during the spring and summer months. It contains herbs such as lemongrass, nutmeg, basil and garlic which are real flea and tick deterrents, and so adds extra protection against external parasites to the healthy natural protection of a raw food diet.

So although dogs on a balanced raw food diet tend to be healthier and less prone to parasites or illness than dogs on processed diets, a little natural help from the **Diet'Dog** range is of immense benefit too!

about Richard Allport

Richard Allport, BVetMed, VetMFHom, MRCVS has been a vet for forty years, and has had **a special interest in herbal and other natural medicines for pets for thirty years**. Since 1996 he has treated pets with acupuncture, herbs and homoeopathy at his referral centre at Potters Bar in Hertfordshire and at Bayswater in London. Richard also writes and broadcasts about natural therapies for pets; his latest book is 'Heal Your Dog the Natural Way'. Richard has two Bedlington Terriers called Jamjar and Frankie.

