



This page is very much still under construction. I realize there is way too much information here. Absorb it at your own pace. I sat on the fence for a long time...researching for nearly 2 years before switching in 2001.

[Return to SOS HOME](#) [If You Must Feed Kibble Choose A Good One](#)

NOTE: All the dogs currently being fostered in our program are not completely off of kibble. If you want a rawfed rescue dog, let us know and we will be happy to transition them for you.

A good percentage of those involved with SOS German Shepherd Rescue count ourselves among the growing number of dog owners that have given up on commercially processed pet food and adopted a more natural diet, or "*species appropriate*" nutrition. Raw Meaty Bones and organs found in their prey is what dogs have been eating for several hundred thousands of years, so why should we think that a highly processed, grain laden kibble product should be superior to that of a Raw diet?

Prey-model raw feeding is 80% meat, 10% bone, 10% organs over time is basically considered the model to follow as it closely mimics the proportions of prey animals in the wild. The bone doesn't need to take up much of the diet, but even though a small part (maybe 10-15% of what's eaten) it's an essential part.

Feeding a carnivore raw isn't a matter of opinion or individual preference. This is what they were designed to eat. In the wild, dogs and cats would not eat cooked meats and grains. Their constitution is meant for enzyme rich raw meat, raw bones and the natural probiotics found in green tripe. There are many thousands of dogs being fed raw and the



problems are miniscule. What we do see is health...clean teeth and nice breath, lack of doggy smell, many diseases (diabetes, epilepsy and cancers) brought under control, etc. The list of positives far outweighs any possible negatives.

OK its more natural...does that mean its better?

The Benefits of feeding a raw diet can include:

- Improved general health (Avoid ear infections, itchy skin, eye discharge, bowel problems, allergies.)
- No doggy odor
- No finicky eaters
- Puppies growing at a slower rate, decreasing the change of strained joints in pups growing too fast
- Naturally white healthy teeth
- Decreased incidence of bloat
- Stool volume is decreased due to the fact that the dog is utilizing everything out of the food. It's not just passing it through
- Stools are also less odiferous.
- Easier maintenance of healthy weight
- Calmer demeanor
- Happy, healthy, energetic and alert dogs

Some Cons to feeding Raw may include:

- A dog without a healthy immune system may not be able to digest the food. Consider the use of probiotic supplements if this is a concern.
- Raw feeding can cost more than kibble. However, if you buy in bulk and you will spend less money than on a premium kibble.
- It takes time to prepare the meals. It may be true that feeding Raw is not as convenient as pouring nuggets out of a bag. It takes time to cut up and bag bigger meats into meal-size servings and stash them in the freezer. Also one must remember to defrost daily.

YOU CAN DO IT!

Your dogs will adore you for recognizing that they deserve and need to eat a species appropriate diet. Once you switch, you will ask yourself like so many of us did"What took me so long?"

— is just that, we feed animal body parts to try to approximate a whole prey animal. approximately 10-15% organs (kidney, liver, lungs, pancreas, etc.), 10-15% EDIBLE bones (not large weight bearing bones from cows, deer and bison), and the rest meat and meat and green tripe and gullets and tracheas and more meat. Better would be whole chickens, and yes chicken leg bones are just fine. The weight bearing bones you need to be concerned about are from LARGE animals like cows, deer and bison. Chickens are killed VERY young, and their bones are too small to worry about even for the smallest dogs.

Big meaty parts on a bone that you can barely see is what we're aiming at...

Pork picnics, legs, butt roasts, beef shoulder clods, shanks (this includes a weight bearing bone that you will pick up and remove when the meat is gone),



So What Is It That Our Rawfed Dogs Eat?

Our own dogs eat chicken (legs, thighs, breast, necks, hearts, gizzards, backs and even feet), pork necks, pork shoulders (picnics), turkey (again thighs, breast, necks, backs, feet), fish, lamb and beef shanks (Like with pork, I cut some of the meat off and give them a RMB, then use the boneless meat to supplement a less meaty bone), chicken/turkey heart and gizzards, pork heart, beef heart, beef liver, ground tripe, venison... the list is endless and our dogs are thriving.

whole boneless briskets (can be conveniently whacked to make meal sized, yet challenging hunky beef). Lamb shanks, necks, breasts,

Whole fish, mackerel, bonita, sardines, smelt.. all wonderful whole prey, high in Omega 3s, oily, good for coats.

And organ meats, liver, kidney, pancreas, lungs.. and any other organ meats you can get.. from every animal you can.. lamb, goat, chicken, pigs, cows.. etc..

No veggies necessary, no ground mixes necessary, no mixing, very little mess.

RAW FOOD GUIDELINES

Too many people get too hung up on percentages in relation to a raw diet for their animals. The exact correct percentages to feed are mostly meat, some bone and some organs. That's it.

10-15% consumable bone

5-10% organ meats (with half of that being liver)

all the rest is MEAT and fish, skin, fat, sinew, etc.

Don't get too hung up on percentages or any other number when you feed a raw diet. If you feed raw meaty bones from a variety of animals and throw in some organs a couple of times a week, it will all balance itself out over time. People tend to get hung up on exact numbers. Don't fall into that trap.

In your own diet, do you make a conscious effort to eat exactly the right amount of meat, fat, greens, yellow veggies, fruits and other food groups? Do you consciously worry about how much calcium or phosphorus you get or how much vitamin A or B or C or the others? I think like me, probably not. You just know that over time you will get what you need and you know your own health.

A variety of raw meat and meaty bones. Chicken necks, wings, drumsticks, quarters, frames, whole chickens cut to serving sizes, etc. Lamb necks, flaps. Beef soup bones. Ox tongue, ox heart, lamb heart, ox cheek, beef muscle meat. Smaller quantities of organ meats: liver, kidney, brains, giblets.

Whole and half chicken; chicken leg quarters; half and quartered turkey; turkey neck; whole and half Cornish game hen; whole and half duck, pheasant; half and quartered goose. Pork shoulder roast; pork necks (the more meat the better); pork ribs (slabs); pork hock; pigs feet (unsliced and long--10" and more); pork brisket bone. Beef necks; beef brisket bone; beef ribs (slabs); beef shank (thick slices or whole); weird, varied and miscellaneous beef bones like "hip". Anything/everything goat; anything/everything lamb. Rabbit. Whole raw fish. Venison. Emu ribs; emu legs.

Online Resources

- [Raw Learning.com](http://RawLearning.com)
- [Raw Fed Dogs.net](http://RawFedDogs.net)
- GermanShepherds.com on Raw
- [Carnivore Feed Supplier](http://CarnivoreFeedSupplier.com)
- [The Urban Carnivore](http://TheUrbanCarnivore.com)
- RawMeatyBones.com
- [The Myths of Raw Feeding](http://TheMythsOfRawFeeding.com)
- [Coupons from The Sunaday Saver](http://CouponsFromTheSunadaySaver.com)

Yahoo Groups

Join To Learn Everything You Need To Know

- [Raw Feeding List](http://RawFeedingList.com)
- [Raw Chat](http://RawChat.com)
- [Rawfed GSDs](http://RawfedGSDs.com)

Recommended Reading

Give Your Dog A Bone by Dr. Ian Billinghurst

Grow Your Puppy With Bones by Dr. Ian Billinghurst

Natural Nutrition: The Ultimate Diet for Dogs & Cats by Kymmythy Schultze

Switching To Raw by Susan K. Johnson

The Complete Herbal Handbook for the Dog by Juliette de Bairacli Levy

Some Benefits of Raw Foods

- Minerals better assimilate - Vitamins more bioavailable
- Beneficial antioxidants present
- Amino acids more bioavailable
- Natural digestive enzymes still present
- Probiotics spared
- Amino acids such as Taurine are not destroyed
- Puppies growing at a slower rate, decreasing the change of strained joints in pups growing too fast
- Naturally white healthy teeth
- Decreased incidence of bloat
- Stool volume is decreased due to the fact that the dog is utilizing everything out of the food. It's not just passing it through.
- No doggie odor and stools are also less odiferous
- Easier maintenance of healthy weight
- Calmer demeanor
- Happy, healthy, energetic and alert dogs

The cooked dog food made from grains and questionable meat found in pet food stores and supermarkets is not their species specific diet. Cooking destroys enzymes and probiotics that your pet needs to properly utilize their food.

Some Negatives of Heat Processed Kibble

- Loss of up to 100% of certain vitamins
- Loss of up to 60% of certain amino acids
- Enzymes destroyed
- Probiotics destroyed
- Loss of up to 10% of certain fatty acids
- Fats can become toxic or rancid
- Oxidation of cholesterol
- Grains in food cause highs and lows in blood sugar, whether your a dog, human, whatever. Lack of grains causes blood sugars to be more stable, diminishing "highs" and "lows" that can lead to hyperactivity.

RECIPE FOR GETTING STARTED

Start with a whole chicken. (For big dogs you can feed it whole or cut in half. For smaller dogs you can quarter it.) Hand it to the dog. Easy, huh?

HOW MUCH TO FEED

Watch your dog and vary it's diet accordingly. A daily ration, to start, should be 2-3% of your dog's ideal adult body weight. But I feed 4 of my 5 German Shepherds slightly less than 2 % when I notice they're looking a bit heavier than is good for them. The 5th GSD (the youngest and most active) always looks skinny to me, so she gets a bit more daily. If you're feeding twice a day, feed half at each feeding. If your dog is becoming too heavy, you must feed less energy-rich food or feed less frequently. Varying your dog's diet according to observations also allows adjustments for more subtle indicators of health such as the state of the coat. For example a dry lusterless coat would indicate that not enough essential fatty acids were being fed, and you would increase eggs or fish or oil accordingly.

If you prefer you can buy chicken parts (Chicken wings, backs, necks, legs, feet) basically all of it, including the bone.

No - RAW CHICKEN BONES WILL NOT HURT YOUR DOG. They are soft and flexible and can be digested more easily. Sometimes in the first few months you might see bits and pieces of bone fragments in the stool, this is nothing to worry about- within time this should stop.

COOKED bones should NEVER be given to dogs, they are hard and splinter and aren't as easily digested. Any cooked bone is taboo. Also smoked meat is cooked and therefore dangerous. I also would not give rawhide as they cannot be digested too well and can cause a blockage in the intestine, and they have nasty chemicals on them.

Chicken is usually used as the main part of the diet since its so inexpensive. But Take It Easy! Feed one protein source (chicken) for a week before introducing another protein source for variety. Beef, fish, rabbit, pork, lamb, goat and pork consist of RMB (raw meaty bones).

Yogurt can be given in small amounts (plain, no preservatives), eggs, muscle meat and offal (kidneys, liver, etc).

You must remember that there are thousands of us feeding a species appropriate raw diet & at one time or another, the majority of us felt a little reservation with serving meaty bones. However, once you do the research & empower yourself with knowledge about how a dog's digestive system works, the fear pretty much disappears. Dog eats half chicken....half chicken drops into stomach where stomach acids churn & blast these bones into a granular "slurry"...this slurry works it's way through the intestines & comes out, expressing the anal sacs on their way out since the outside of stools are slightly bumpy...nature has everything figured out perfectly. You must do what is best for your dog & feeding any species appropriately almost always guarantees a stronger immune system & optimal health.

Just as you would not give a horse raw meat, one should not be feeding a carnivore cooked meat & grains. It is wrong & unnecessary.

If you can understand the digestive system, the way stomach acids are designed to turn bones into slurry for digestion and extraction of nutrients...

Bird bones are 85% air. In order to fly the bones have "strut" structure and are mostly hollow with very thin "layers" on the outside. The acid in a dogs stomach is made to digest the calcium and phosphorus and other minerals in bones. If you worry about those "shards" going down then freeze them so the dog chews more thoroughly. The real proof is to look in their dumps and you wont see the bones. **BUT Cooking changes (denatures) bones and protein and makes the bones a lot less digestible.**

-
- I look for deals under \$1/lb. Love the 10 lb bags of Chicken Quarters for under 43 cents a pound!
 - Free is even better....got a friend that hunts? You'll take what he'd normally throw away off his hands. Watch the weight bearing bones on big deer and the like.
 - Know anyone with freezer burned meat? Raw-fed dogs don't care!
 - I do draw the line at road kill, though I know raw feeders that regularly scoop up freshly killed animals off the road. I understand they like to freeze "fresh" road kill for a good amount of time to kill any possible resident parasites.
 - Pork is great, and fits the red meat bill. Every part of the pig contains edible bone for most dogs. Be forewarned though: Mine get a bit gassy with pork. It does seem to put the weight on pretty quickly too. I just love getting a deal on a picnic roast....cutting off some of the meat for a later non-bone meal, and handing the bone with some meat attached to a dog that is beside themselves with happiness at such a meal. (They must think I am the greatest hunter of all time!)
 - Rabbit is another one that can be great for large or small dogs. There isn't a part that should pose a problem for any dog.
 - Lamb and young goat are GREAT red meat options too. Mostly they're pasture fed and finished too so offer the benefits of grassfed meat (Omega 3's galore!), and have quite soft bones since they're young and are small ungulates.

- Fish is another great one. Offers good protein variety and some species offer nice omega 3's too. And those bones are easy eatin': salmon, sardines, herring, menhaden, mackerel (not king or spanish, due to mercury levels), anchovies, trout. Basically, oily fleshed ocean fish. Based on generally accepted mercury level-warnings, you might want to skip king and Spanish mackerel, tuna, shark, swordfish and tilefish. How do I define most practical "best"? Blue, jack or Indian mackerel, baby bonita, sardine, herring, anchovy. After that would come white- fleshed marine fish with acceptable mercury levels--Pacific halibut or cod, Alaskan pollock, tilapia for example. these types of fish are good to feed: salmon (NOT Pacific Northwest), canned tuna, canned sardines, canned Atlantic Mackerel, cod, haddock, ocean perch, smelt, blackfish, whiting, rid fish, mullet, prawns and even crabs.

[More on Ocean Fish](#) dogs should AVOID the following fish: shark, swordfish, tilefish, snapper, lake trout, king mackerel, marlin, bass, white perch, orange roughy, pickerel, fresh tuna, halibut, grouper and carp due to mercury content.

PRE-GROUND RAW

From time to time I do buy the "pre-packaged pre-ground" stuff but it gets expensive quickly. We've tried Quail, Rabbit, Buffalo, Venison, Salmon, Duck, Goose, Goat and Emu. The dogs like it but they miss the the recreational (and teeth cleansing) benefits of gnawing on a big RMB.

What surprises feeders of ground raw food is how cruddy the animal's teeth get. While it is indeed raw food, it is not raw food fed correctly. With pre-ground, the nutrients may be there but the physical interaction is not. While "Prey-model" provides just what nature intended the way nature intended.

TRANSITIONING

Transitioning is feeding only one type of meat for at least a week, most start with chicken since the bones are easier to chew. Then watching to make sure there are no allergic reactions (itchies, etc). Then introduce another type of meat the next or couple weeks after that.

Transitioning is also helping dogs eat it appropriately, like freezing it so they don't gulp, giving them huge pieces they cant gulp. Also, like for a couple of mine it is lightly sautÃ©ing the outside of the meat or organs so they realize it is food (and quit just licking it!) Or I use a scissors to cut meat flaps which helps my little ones lost front teeth to get it off the bone.

I don't think dogs need daily variety in the same way humans do. That is projecting our needs onto animals. What is needed is complete foods, meaning all parts of a whole animal. Easy with chicken that comes with organs, not so easy with cow. Over time (months) different kinds of animals provide nutritional variety.

Dogs are carnivores, they eat meat and fat. Fat will not make animals fat. It is energy food. Dogs do not need the kind of foods we eat. They don't NEED veggies. If they are used to them, give whole, raw veggies as a treat. Normal prey for dogs do not have thick layers of fat it is true. But if you give your dog the amount of food required for the weight you want him to be at he will lose the weight. High protein/high fat diets leads to weight loss.

Do Not Mix dry food and raw. This is a bad combination and known to cause digestive upset in many dogs. Grain laden kibble is digested at a different rate (using different digestive enzymes) than those used to digest raw. There is an exception to this: IF YOU ARE FEEDING A GRAIN-FREE KIBBLE, it is okay to add a bit of BONELESS MEAT, but you are not feeding raw. No matter what, just remember that **Bones and Kibble do not mix.**

TIPS

The best way for you to judge whether you are getting the bone-meat ratio right would be to observe your dogs' stools. The stools should be light brown, firm not hard. You should also take a look at the stools when it has dried up a bit. In case it turns white then it may indicate that there is too much calcium in the diet. Just like the stools are almost black when there is an overdose of Muscle Meat.

FOR PROBLEM BEES

Fill a small bowl with water and some liquid dishwashing soap. Take a skewer and put a piece of meat on the skewer, sliding the meat to the center. Put the skewer with the meat on top of the bowl. Put the bowl about 10 to 15 feet from you.

The bees are attracted to the meat, overcome by the soap fumes, and they fall in the soapy water.

Things That Have Made Raw Feeding Easier

- A deep freezer (duh!); we now have 2 big uprights, but we've got 5 resident German Shepherds, and usually a foster GSD as well. There's enough room--so far! Lots of freezer space allows us to get better prices by buying in bulk. So its not uncommon to bring home 100 pounds of tripe or four 40 pound cases of chicken leg quarters, or turkey necks, or whatever. Whatever I bring home all seems to fit. The money I spent on freezers is quickly made up in reduced raw bills. And you can find great deals on used freezers.
- A big Chinese cleaver--I got it a few years ago at an Asian market for about \$4-5, and while it's not super-sharp, the weight really helps to chop up turkey frames, deer parts, etc. It's made of one solid piece of stainless steel, and I can't imagine that they'd cost much more now.
- Kitchen shears--they're a time-and-wrist-saver for when the chopping doesn't work anymore and my arm's tired.
- Kitchen scale--finally got one for only \$8 at Wal-Mart. It goes up to 7 pounds and is very easy to zero out and adjust. Makes mealtime go a lot faster when I don't have to guess and worry about how much they're getting.
- Lots and lots of canned pumpkin--this stuff is great. If I thought it worked well when they were on kibble, I'm even more convinced of its greatness now. They were constipated when we started the raw diet, but since we added in the pumpkin, it's been smooth sailing!
- Cotton towels - I used to go through TONS of paper towels cleaning up. But I bought a big bag of the white cotton work towels at Sams Club and I still have most of them! Just wash them in hot water with bleach and detergent and you're ready to go!
- A selection of large plastic trays recycled from the grocery for defrosting. Bags leak and so the trays keeps all the liquid from spreading over my countertop!
- A second refrigerator - we have a fridge in the shop, along with the 2 freezers - for the dogs food. I keep the defrosted leftovers in there as well as their supplements (like the Salmon Oil). We use the freezer part for small stuff for us.
- Plastic cutting boards - don't bother buying the expensive wood ones - just get a couple cheap plastic ones. The way I whack the raw meaty bones I ended up taking chunks out of the wood cutting board! Even the plastic ones get chipped after a few months of use. So I now buy the cheap ones and just toss them when they get too gouged to get clean.
- Good commercial grade knives and Electric Knife.
- Clorox Clean-up or Lysol 3-in-1 spray
- Stainless steel bowls--so much easier to clean!

hits