

THE BEST DOG DIET EVER

by Caroline Griffith



Designed by Nature, Fed by You

with foreword by Nick Thompson BSc (vet sci) Hons. BVM&S. Vet MfHom.

*Dedicated to Dawn, whose passion and dedication for
natural dog care inspired me along my animal healing journey.
For which I will always be grateful.*

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Foreword

Caroline has produced a very concise, informative and easy to read manual that will help the novice and stimulate the veteran raw-fooder. This book will help all dog owners to a greater understanding of their dog, their dog's digestion and how best to cater for them.

The problem with beginning to feed raw is that there is just too much information, opinion and prejudice out there to know where to start. Opinions are like noses; everyone has one. And everyone is sure that they have the answer. The truth is that many of them have good ideas that can help your dog. No one has all the answers for your particular dog, but you can enjoy trying different approaches to find the system that works best.

I see dogs at my practice every day that benefit from raw food. Some are very sick, some are supposedly 'healthy' on processed food; all of them benefit from the change from factory food to a well-crafted raw diet. As Caroline says, all dogs, like all humans, are different. In time, you will find tweaks to the general advice that suit your dog better; in astronomy they call this the Goldilocks zone – neither extreme, but just right for your dog at their particular time of life.

We are told by our doctors to avoid processed foods. If you think about it, even prisoners, astronauts and soldiers at war are not subjected to 'scientifically balanced', biologically inappropriate dehydrated or tinned foods repeated ad nauseam for months and months, years and years. Somehow, we have been brainwashed into thinking that this is ok for dogs.

Read this short book. You will learn a little or a lot about your dog. And they will be grateful for it, in their own happy way.

**Nick Thompson BSc (Vet Sci) Hons,
BVM&S, VetMFGom, MRCVS**

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Canis Lupus Familiaris

No matter whether you own a pure bred Chihuahua, a big Great Dane, a soppy Staffie, a loopy but lovable Labrador or like my dog a Whattie (a we're not quite sure what...) beneath their various shapes, colours and breed behaviour traits they are all basically made of the same stuff. Their visual differences do nothing to affect their basic nutritional needs as a 'dog' or the function of their bodies' different parts, such as their immune system or their digestive system.

Whilst the human intervention of 'breeding' has bred genetic visual traits and predispositional health traits to some breeds, they still all remain only a version of the 'Canis Lupus Familiaris'.



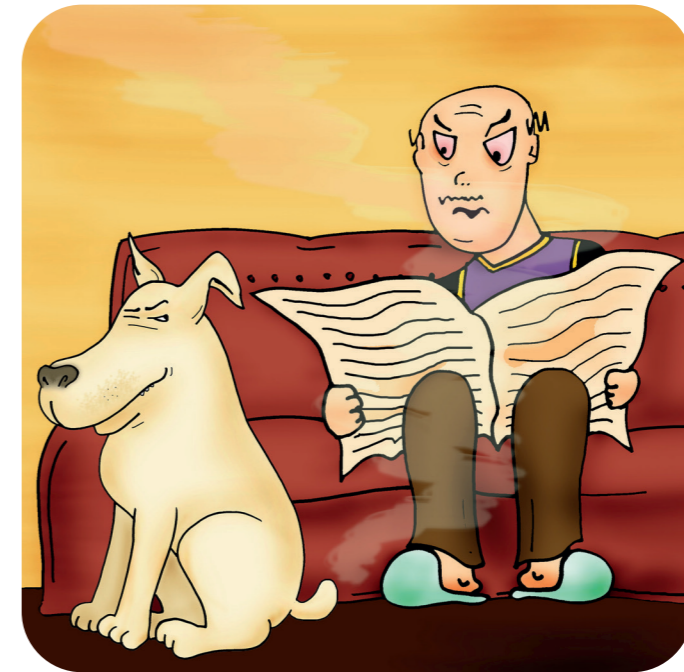
It is interesting to note that we are often quick to assess our dog's behaviour and psychology for similarities to a wolf, and yet we commonly forget the dramatic physical similarities and nutritional needs.

This book explains what types of foods the canis lupus familiaris – i.e. your dog, will thrive happily and healthily on, how a dog's digestive system actually works and answers all the most common questions and uncertainties dog owners face when choosing the best way to feed their dogs.

For us to fully understand what foods are best for our dogs we have to first consider their physical requirements and take a look at where the food goes into once it has been eaten!

No matter what it is that goes into your dog's bowl and is 'wolfed' down (couldn't resist the pun there), once in your dog's body it will all gradually get broken down, broken down and even further broken down to finally end up as simply a whole host of molecular chemical elements that pass around your dog's body doing important jobs e.g. building cell walls, helping the liver function as a liver, or switching on and off hormones. Nutrients are chemicals, and your dog's body is in fact a chemical powerhouse working silently (at least most of the time...) to keep your dog's body alive, immune to disease and to mend it if the need to do so arises.

Just like us humans, the Canis familiaris has evolved to digest, absorb and function on certain nutrients and nutritional elements. Therefore it's quite simple to work out what to feed your dog on – find out the nutrients and elements that may be required, to provide exactly what their bodies can digest, absorb and need - to keep them healthy, vibrant and full of balanced energy.

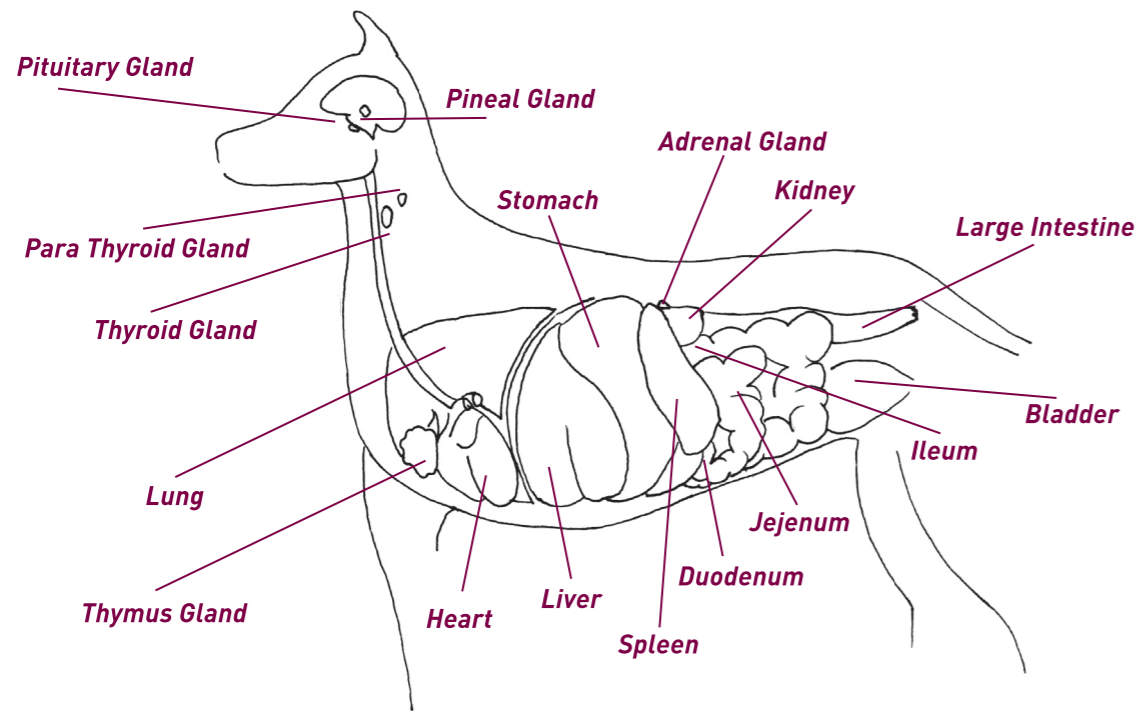


Dog Biology

Evolution being as clever as it is, your dog's body has not only evolved to benefit from certain nutrients but it has cleverly evolved to be physically able to digest, i.e. break down for use, these nutrients from certain food sources. It is also cleverly able to recognize both valuable nutrients and invaluable ones at a cellular level has evolved to benefit from, and require a whole host of enzymes and micro-nutrients to assist in doing so.

The next few pages aim to show what happens to your dog's food on its digestive journey. All the way from being eaten from the bowl right through to being a series of useful chemical nutrients.

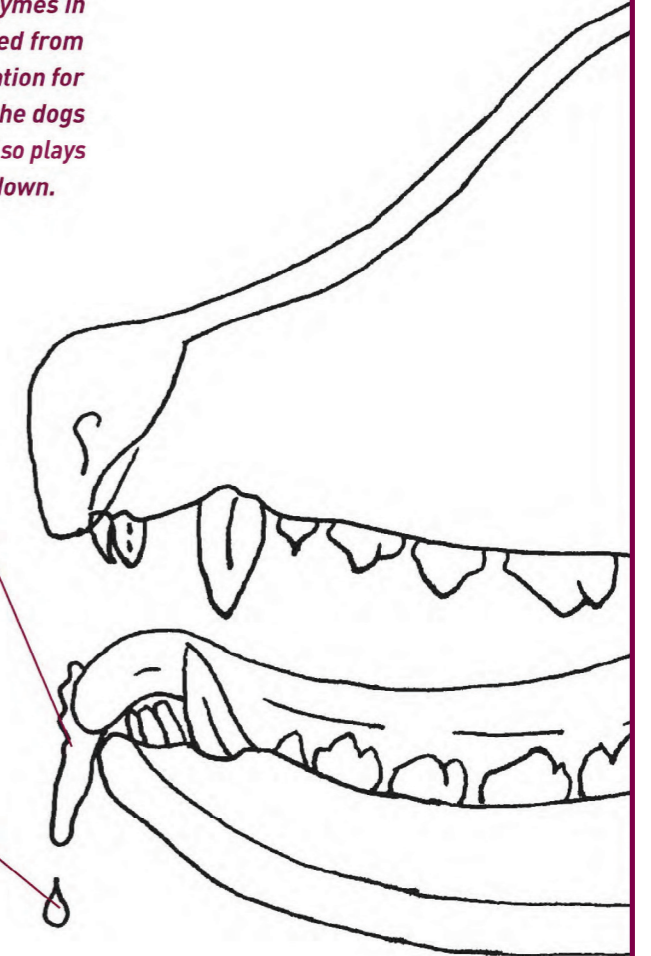
A simple diagram showing the position of the organs and systems that will be mentioned throughout the book.

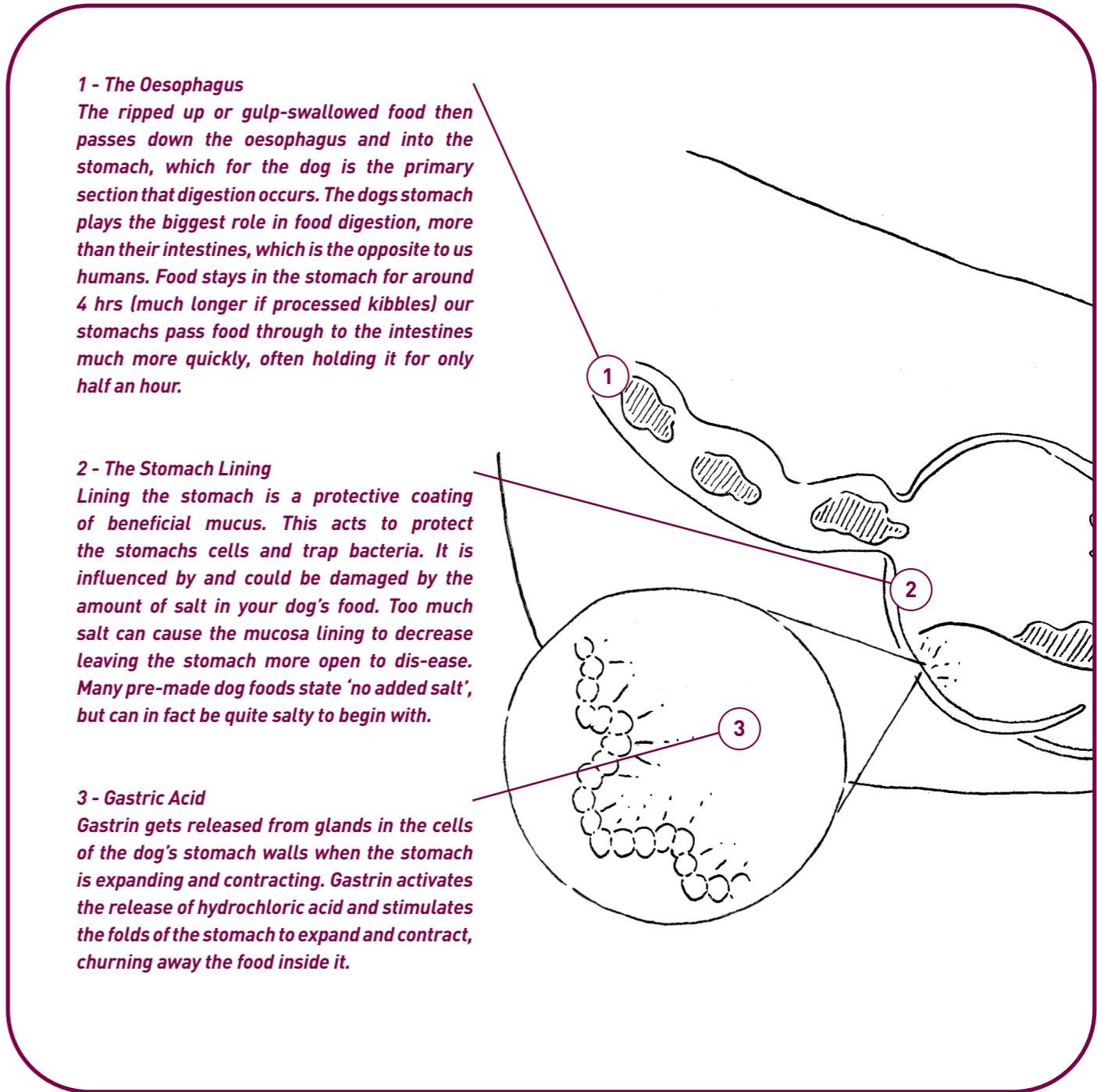
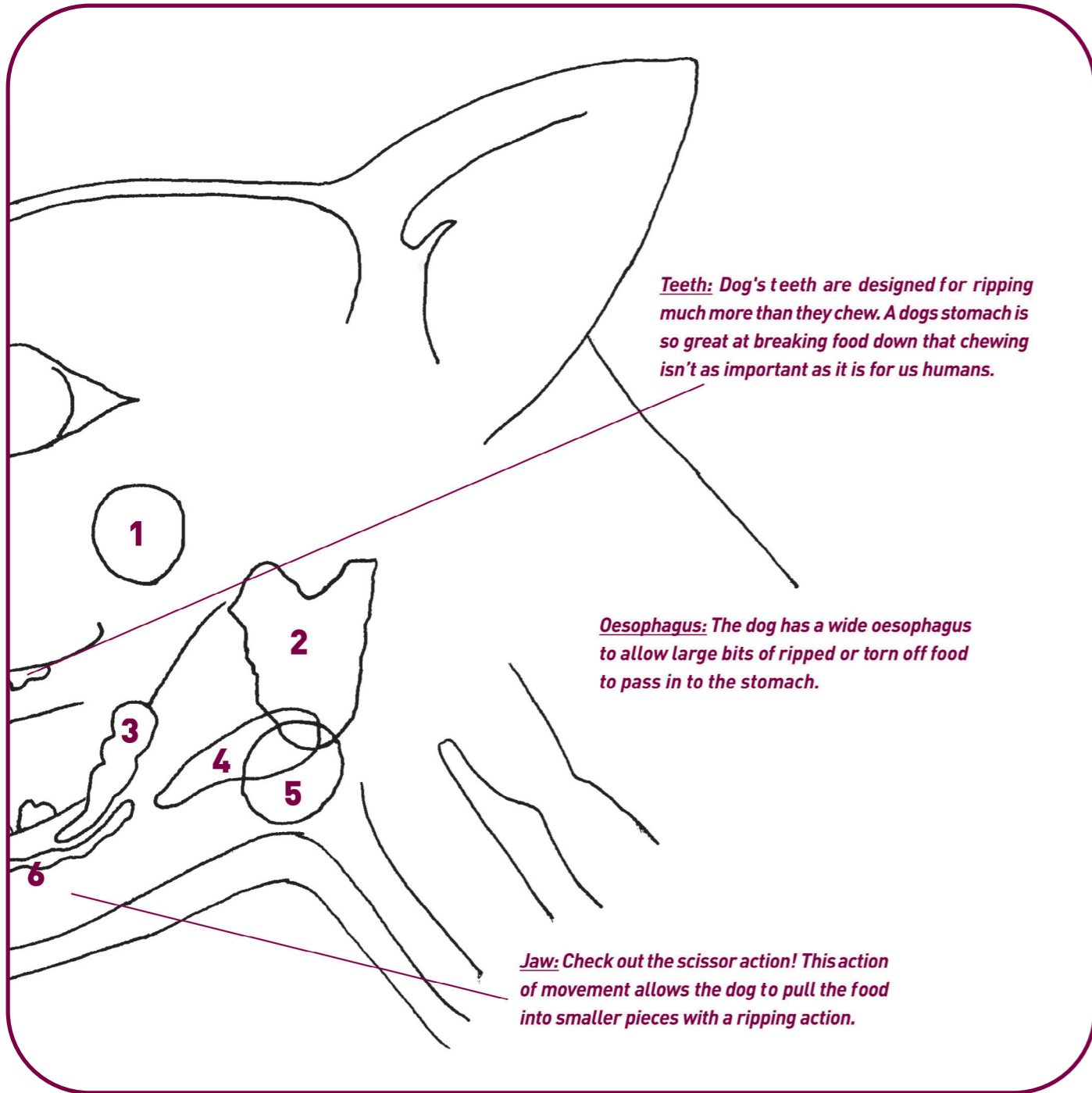


First of all, your dog gobbles up his food... The process of breaking down food for nutrients, begins in the mouth

Saliva: Your dog's saliva plays an entirely different role to the saliva us humans produce. There are no digestive enzymes in dog saliva. A dog's saliva is produced from 6 glands, (no. 1-6) mainly as lubrication for the bits of food that will pass down the dogs Oesophagus. It is 99% water and also plays an important role in cooling a dog down.

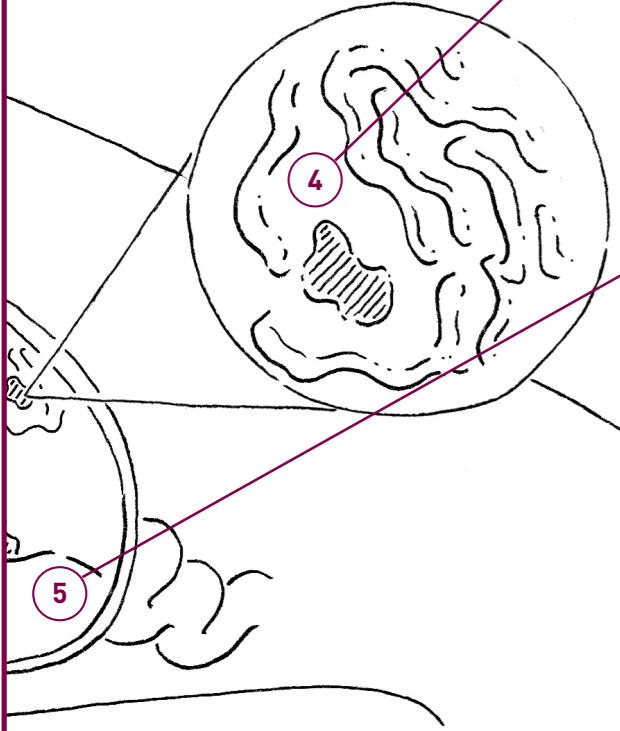
There is no Amylase in your dog's saliva. (Amylase: starch digesting enzyme) The dog has cleverly evolved not to produce amylase in order to protect his teeth from decay. If amylase was present starches (carbs) would be broken down into sugars and could cause dental decay. Any carbohydrate based, or sugary, treats we give our dogs will begin to undo the good this clever protective arrangement does, and could create dental issues.





4 - The folds of the stomach lining
 A dog is designed to eat in one go, until they feel full, then rest. To aid with this their stomach folds are cleverly able to expand to maximise the surface area of the digestive process.
 The stomach is essentially playing the role of chewing by expanding and contracting.
 The stomach rarely gets to expand and contract on a processed, or grain-based meal. Often expansion occurs due to the swelling of the food but the movement doesn't occur as it should do.

5 - A Ph balance of 1-2, lots of hydrochloric acid in the stomach.
 Dogs have a stronger acidic stomach than us. Meaning they are much more capable of digesting raw bone, and raw meat. The stronger acid is also wonderful for killing off bacteria. Unfortunately the stronger acid also means the digestive enzyme amylase does not survive well and is thus not available in the quantities it needs to be to digest starchy, grain based foods.
 Dogs that have Sensitive Stomachs are dogs in which this natural expanding and contracting technique is compromised, usually by being fed too much processed food. They then cannot produce enough gastrin or hydrochloric acid and appear to be 'sensitive' to bacteria they pick up from things they find outside, or from different food types they then cannot digest due to the lack of gastrin. These dogs actually need real food even more than the average dog to rebalance their stomach linings natural abilities. They are actually sensitive to the processed food, not to bacteria itself. You can feed lightly cooked real food to make the switch if you fear issues will occur, but those dogs do really need real food to support them responsibly.



A note on Amylase and Bloat

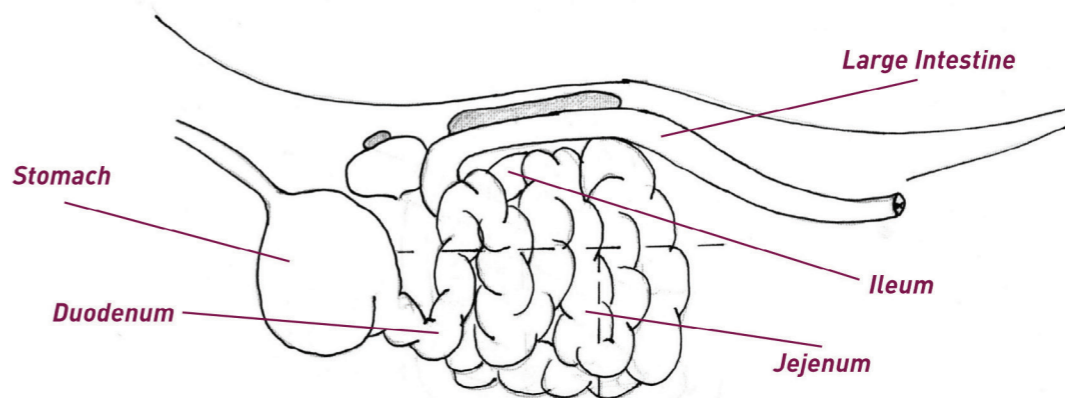
Amylase is the digestive enzyme needed to digest starchy carbohydrates. Not only is it not present in the dog's saliva, but it does not survive well in the dog's high stomach pH level. When a dog's stomach becomes full of carbohydrate based foods, the foods are prone to staying undigested in the stomach due to a lack of this enzyme. The undigested food then stagnates, causing gasses and leaving the dog's stomach less able to expand properly, flexibly contract its cell walls and produce enough enzymes to cope with even any protein or meat based food that it does receive. Should this issue become a regular occurrence the dog begins to miss out on vital nutrients for health through the compromised digestive capabilities. In some cases it can lead to the life threatening condition called Bloat.

Amylase thrives well in a pH level of 3/4 which is what we have, and is why we humans are much better able to digest starches, grains and carbohydrates!

There is a small amount of Amylase produced by the dog's pancreas. This is passed into the blood stream and can enter the 1st section of the small intestine called the Duodenum. The dog's pancreas has evolved to pass a small amount of the Amylase enzyme into the duodenum, in order for the dog to be able to cope with any starch based foods (such as grasses, plant matter or seeds) that may already be inside the gut of the prey animals that it consumes.

This small amount of starchy carbohydrate will be what the prey animal has eaten himself, prior to being killed for food. It will also have been usefully already partially digested by the prey animal before it reaches the dog's intestines and so much easier for the dog to utilize.

The whole process is worsened by starchy carbohydrates of low moisture, which are even harder for the dog's stomach to cope with.



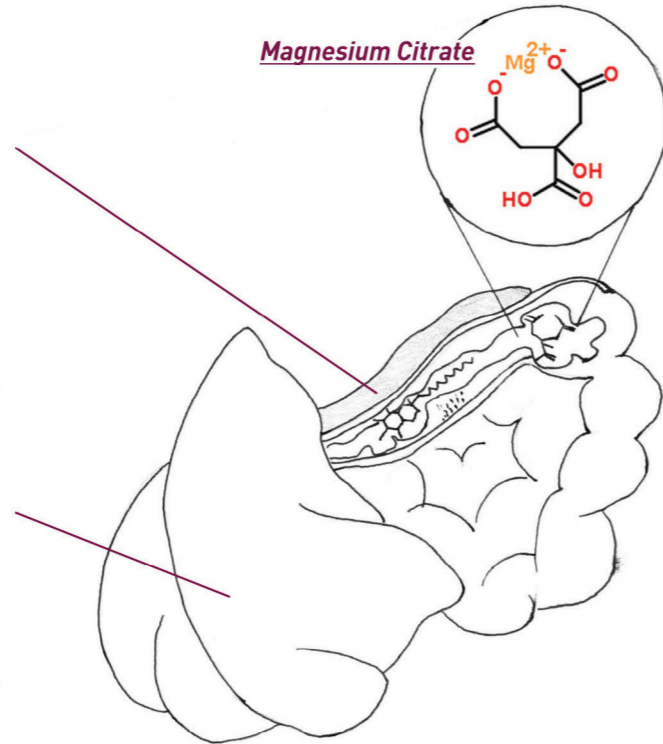
From the stomach the food then reaches the Duodenum

Duodenum: the first section of the small intestine. This is where the food passes into directly from the stomach; by now the food is already largely a great soup like mass of chemical structures, otherwise known as Nutrients!

The pancreas is attached here and secretes special digestive enzymes into the duodenum to assist in digesting any foods the stomach didn't deal with. It also sends its own special antibiotic secretions known as De fensins to help protect the small intestine's immunity. The enzymes from the pancreas are specially designed to help process proteins, they find it hard to deal with carbohydrate based nutrients and can become overworked if lots of those type of nutrients pass through the duodenum.

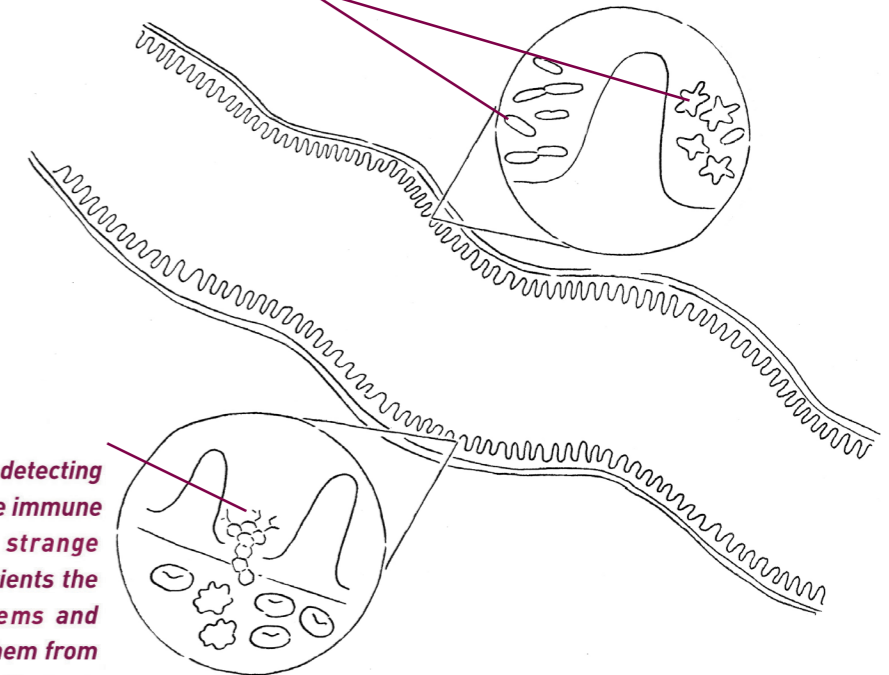
The liver is also able to pass bile through to this part of the dog's small intestine via the gall bladder. This bile also helps break down the food into nutrient molecules, it is especially good at breaking down any fatty substances.

Hormones messages that are part of your dog's Endocrine system can directly influence the functioning of the dog's whole digestive system and the small intestine in particular. Hormones secreted from the adrenals, the pituitary gland and the pineal glands will influence the efficiency of the cells that make up the small intestine. Hormones are like messages to and from different body parts and organs instructing on actions to take or simply to let cells know the state of other sections of the body. If one part of the body is out of balance it can have a knock-on effect on the rest of the body and its cells.



Once passed through the duodenum, the food - now broken down into chemical molecules even further, goes through into the second phase of the small intestine the Jejunum. This section is lined with lots of little hair like structures called Villi which are designed to capture passing nutrients and electrolytes to make them available to the dog's cells for use.

The villi have a fantastic system of renewal which ensures they stay healthy, able to absorb nutrients and perform their other important duties in the intestine. Amongst them are lots of 'good' essential bacteria which also live on the intestinal lining. The bacteria ensure the villi renewal process takes place. The process is compromised if the intestines become sterile from drugs, such as anti-biotics, or if an overgrowth of 'bad' bacteria in the intestines occurs.



Partially broken down nutrient - the dog's body has a great way of detecting something it doesn't recognise, 'The immune system'. When faced with these strange looking unusable molecules/nutrients the body recognises them as problems and begins the process of removing them from the body's systems by putting them on 'alert'! It is these 'on alert' molecules that can lead to inflammatory diseases, immune reactions and allergies.

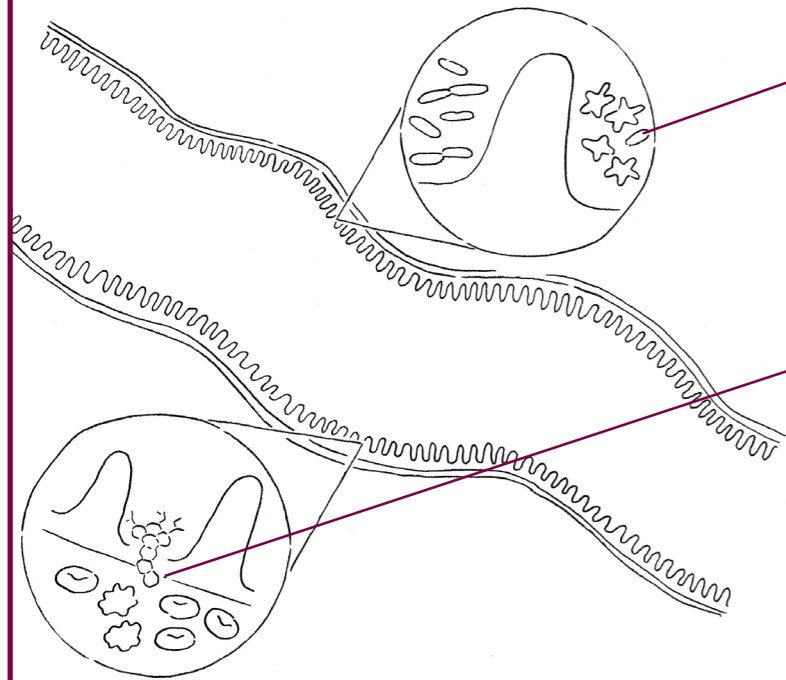
When the dog's small intestine has lots of protein based nutrients passing through it the good bacteria flourish and stay present. If this part of the intestine receives either larger, only partially digested, nutrient molecules, refined sugar molecules or molecules that result from starches having turned stagnant in the stomach as they were not fully digested. The 'good' bacteria then finds the environment unsuitable for breeding and will start to diminish.

Three main events then occur –

1. The dogs misses out on vital nutrients being passed into the blood stream for use by the body,

2. Un needed 'bad' bacteria begins to flourish instead, as the environment becomes perfect for them to multiply in place of the beneficial bacteria. This then compromises food absorption and nutrient assimilation which the villi and the good bacteria are there to facilitate.

3. The villi and the cell wall of the jejunum start to become weak and prone to damage without their protective good bacteria – allowing both unwelcome bacteria, the unwelcome bacteria's toxic waste (known as endo-toxins) and partially broken down nutrients to pass into the blood stream causing immunological reactions or disease.

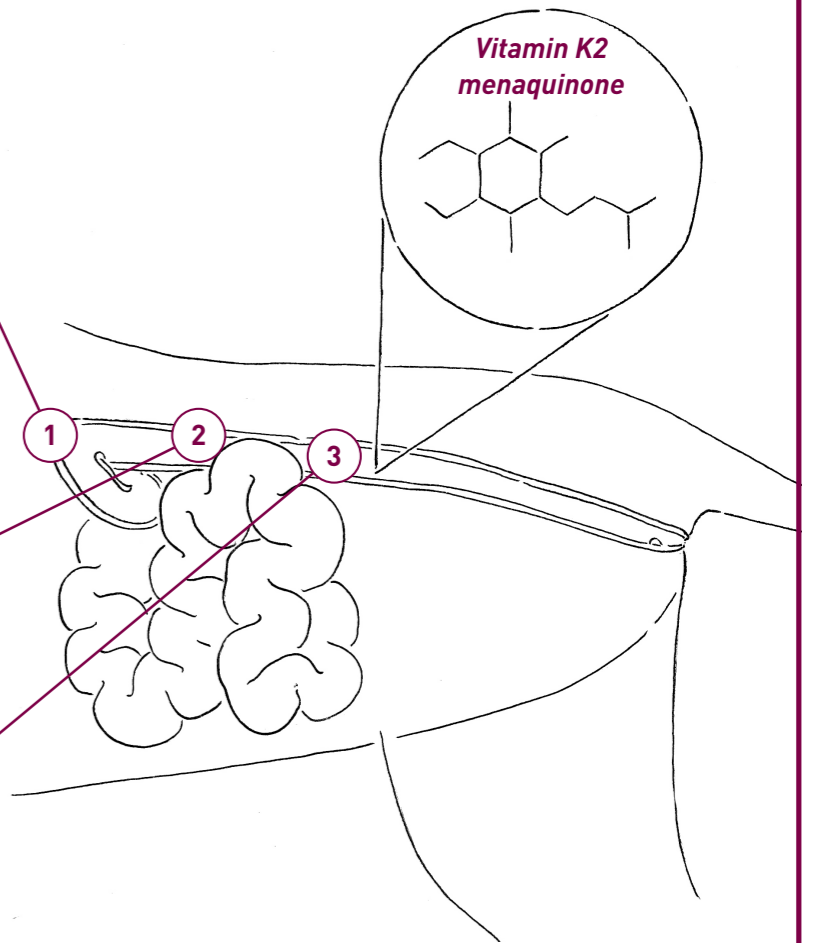


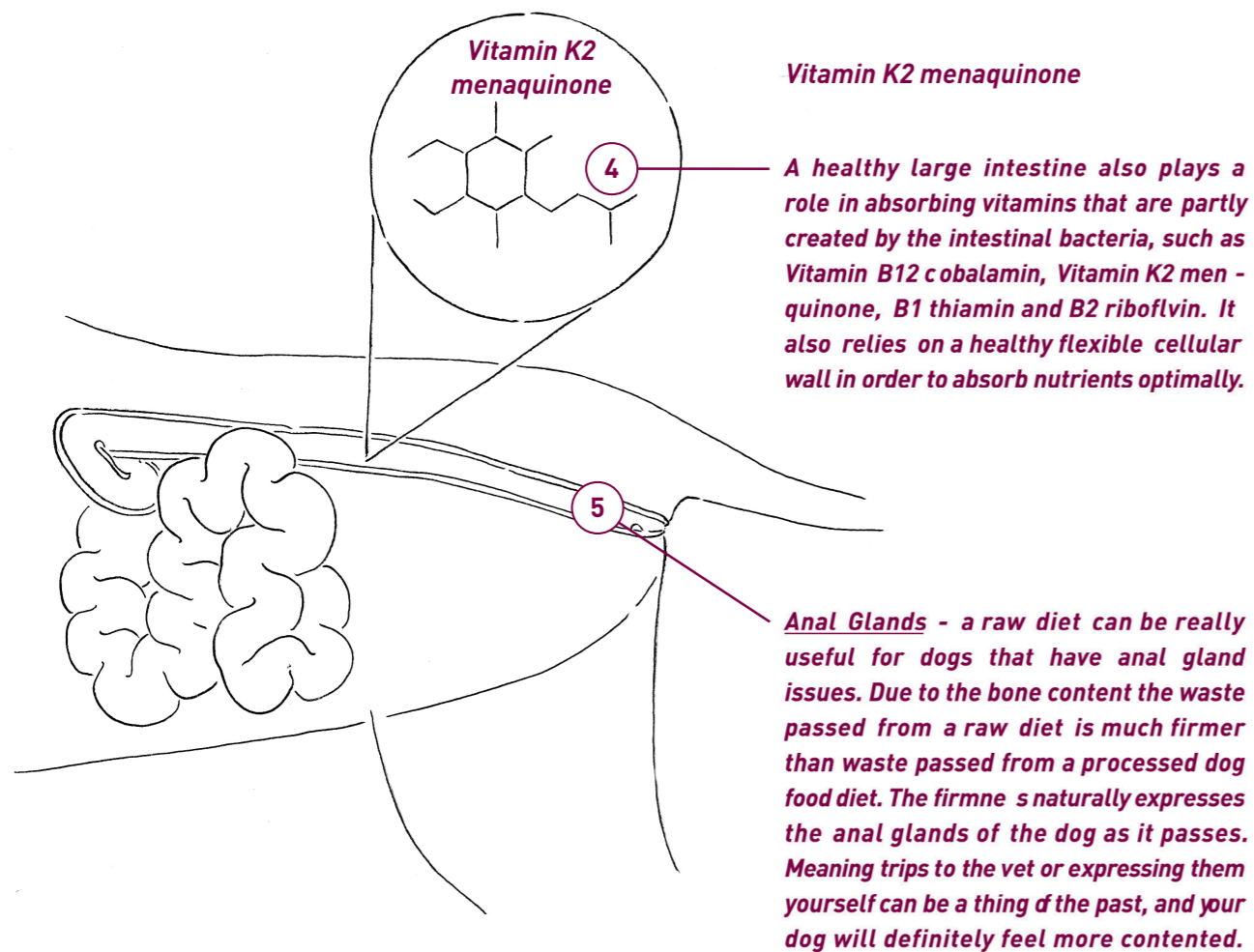
The Ileum the 3rd section of the small intestine, also plays an important role in digesting nutrients and even creating some too. As the food comes through from its time in the jejunum having been further broken down and some of it utilised, it then gets even further broken down in this last and 3rd part of the dog's small intestine. This final Ileum processing is all about making sure the food is fully prepared to enter the large intestine.

Once into the Large intestine the function of the large intestine is to absorb any left-over nutrients into the blood stream, as well as any water, which is vitally needed by the body too. Leaving only the waste and unneeded toxins from the food molecules, to be passed as just that - waste.

In order to do those jobs the Large Intestine maintains a level of movement in its cell walls to move the molecules around and push them further down the tube-like shape that it is. Without this movement known as peristalsis, constipation can occur.

To perform peristalsis the large intestine relies on both water being available in the molecules passing through it and a good amount of the right fatty acids. These come from healthy fats which would have been earlier absorbed into the blood stream for use by the cells of the Large intestine, or still present in the food molecules as they pass through. The Large intestine can be low on fatty acids if either the useful fats were not present in the food the dog ate or if the liver and bile were compromised and unable to perform efficiently.





Further Aspects of Canine Biology and Real Food Diets

One of the benefits of a raw or even real lightly cooked meat diet is that the diet will keep the dog's blood, lymph and tissue functioning in a more alkaline state. All carnivorous animals will naturally be in a more acidic state than a plant-eating being, simply due to eating more meat. But to be too acidic, and not have alkaline balance, can lead to problems, as we will discuss here.

In order to keep the dog's stomach at a high acidic PH the cells around the stomach need to be able to recognise the rest of the body as more alkaline. This forms a sort of guide for the stomach's cells to know how acidic they need to be. If feedback shows the body to be acidic, the stomach is not encouraged to produce as much acid, or as high a PH level. When the dog is in a healthier, slightly more alkaline state, the stomach is fed back that information and will recognise its need to be just the opposite. Essentially the body needs to be 'measured' as alkaline for the stomach to stay in its healthy, functional, acidic state.

Quite a few examples of canine 'sensitive stomachs' are in fact the stomach not being as acidic as it should be. The pancreas also functions better while the body is in a more alkaline state, releasing stronger amounts of its digestive enzymes, and even certain enzymes which are reported to play a role in destroying cancer cell barriers.

When the dog's body is in an overly high acidic state he will be more susceptible to infections,

general aches and pains, may put on weight, and feel stressed or fatigued more frequently. In such a case, the body fluids will also be acidic and will compromise the dog's skeletal system by leaching minerals from bones in order to correct the acid/alkaline imbalance. This can weaken bones, skin, fur and nails. A dog in a highly acidic state will usually also show cravings for more acidic matching foods, such as grains, refined carbs or sugars, and may be hungry more often. This is why it is not always the best idea to simply go by what the dogs chooses, or appears to 'like' eating.

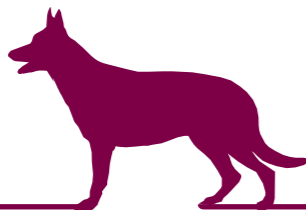
Another attribute of raw foods is their volume of enzymes. Enzymes are very easily destroyed by cooking and processing of foods, yet they are fundamental to the digestive process and also to keeping the cells of the body metabolising and regenerating. It is these enzymes that keep a body alive, full of vitality and health. They are used by the body to digest nutrients and, perhaps less mentioned, they act as catalysts to many of the chemical reactions that need to occur for optimum health. Essentially enzymes make nutrients work in the dog's body - there is little point to nutrients if enzymes are not present too.

Many of these enzymatic actions are oxygen related re-actions, whereby the molecules in the food lose and acquire electrons, in an energy exchange that encourages healing and regeneration. Cooking destroys oxygen-containing enzymes as well as many nutrients such as Vitamin C, which contribute

similar actions to enzymes. The body needs these enzymes, found in living foods, foods that have a life force themselves, which of course a processed food does not. These enzymes are also far more able to make their needed actions if the body is in its balanced acidic/alkaline state.

Processed food might have certain levels of what a body needs to work on a mechanistic point of view, but it can never provide the elements that keep a dog full of vitality, life and optimum regeneration.

Cells of all living creatures are known to have something called Antagonistic Micro-Electrical Tension. This A M-E Tension process is one of the ways that cells of the body communicate with each other, and a way cells are able to literally electrically (or magnetically) attract needed nutrients, and reject (or repel) those that are unneeded or harmful. It is an interchange of energy between the cells and the capillaries of the blood stream. Studies in Vienna have shown that raw foods increase this micro-electrical tension, showing that the cells and capillaries are better able to carry nutrients in or out of cells, and importantly, to carry harmful substances away from cells to be detoxed from the body. If a cooked food diet is constantly given, the membranes between the cells and the capillaries can gradually build up with waste products and ultimately lead to cellular degeneration and ageing. We would all prefer our dogs to live longer with us, and age more slowly.



A word on the liver too

The liver performs a lot of functions for your dog's body. It needs time away from its involvement in food digestion and converting energy from dietary fats to perform those functions.

When fed a processed diet, not only does the dog's body miss out on helpful enzymes for the liver's functioning, but the food can also take longer to be digested, leading to a strain on the liver. The liver simply doesn't get the time it needs to clear toxins, and perform its hormone conversion functions. Grain-based processed foods, and those higher in fats, are particularly taxing on the digestion, and the liver's time.

One of the reasons fasting is thought to support the body is by giving the liver time to function more efficiently.

The thyroid gland also has links with the liver. If your dog has been diagnosed with an endocrine ailment or imbalance, such as a thyroid imbalance, it is worth noting that the hormones produced from the thyroid are not produced in a useable state, they need to be passed through the liver and converted to then be of use to the pet's body. All too often drug approaches simply encourage more hormones to be released, when in reality it could be the liver that needs more support in its conversion process. This should really be considered too.

Some Conclusions so far...

You have now seen for yourself how the dog's digestive system, and the organs related to it, all function. I hope it is now much clearer to you why they are able to cope with certain foods and not others. You can also understand what happens when their bodies do try to digest the foods they are not designed to deal with. Doesn't it just make so much more sense when you can see the scientific why's and how's!

Just to recap and mention a few of the most important facts:

It is worth mentioning that each dog is an individual and will be born with individual cellular well-being levels. Perhaps with a predisposition to a weakness in certain organs or whole systems. After all they are only a product of their parents' own cellular systems, genetic predispositions and nutrient levels. A lack of nutrients or compromised body systems will show up in a different way for every dog, producing a whole host of various symptoms or disease.

All sections of the dog's body work holistically, one part influences the other and all cells communicate constantly – the health of the dog as a whole has a far greater influence than attempting to cure symptoms of individual organs or body parts.

By not having starch digestive enzymes present in their saliva a dog protects his teeth from decay.

Adding grain /starch based treats to the diet upsets this useful attribute.

Grain based foods compromise the function of the teeth, the stomach, the stomach lining, the small intestine, the nutrient absorbing villi, the flexibility of the colon walls and the liver's metabolism. They contain very little useful nutrients for a dog.

An imbalance of intestinal bacteria or an overgrowth of 'bad' bacteria can lead to something called Gut Dysbiosis, which is damage to the intestinal wall. This can allow larger undigested molecules to pass into the dog's blood stream leading to intolerances and allergies. Candida and other unwanted bacteria feed on nutrients and sugars from grain based foods. They survive well and multiply easily in the environments such food creates in the dog's digestive system.

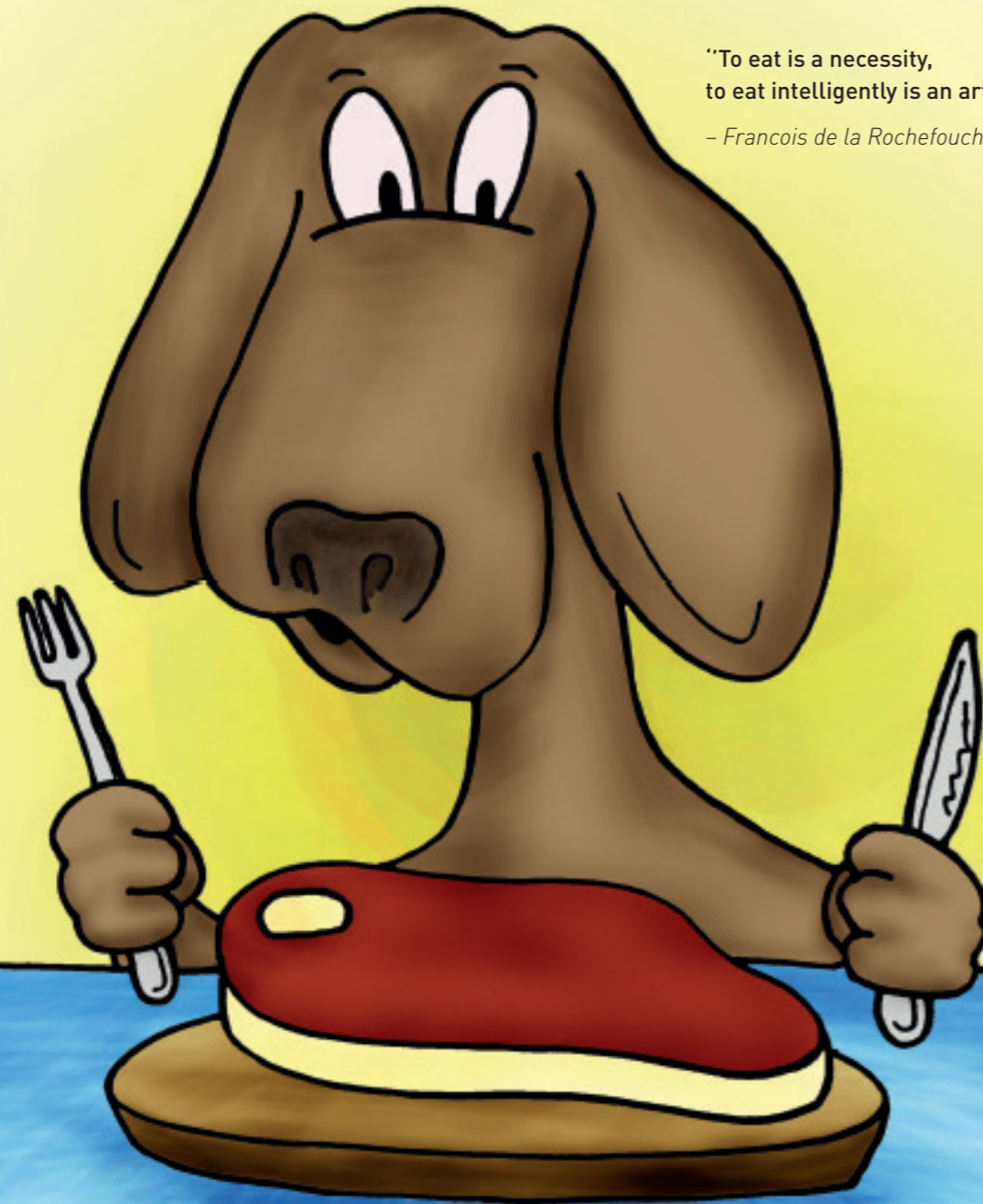
The liver's function is compromised by a grain based diet and also by a constant or too regular supply of food into the stomach and small intestine.

The correct fatty acids are imperative to the function of the dog's digestive system, in fact every cell in his body. Biologically Fats are one of your dog's primary energy sources.

Enzymes are hugely influential and one of the bodies most missed elements in a cooked diet.

“To eat is a necessity,
to eat intelligently is an art”

– Francois de la Rochefoucaud. author



Understand the Vital Role of Fats

We can see from the explanation of the function of the dog's gut systems and digestive abilities that meat foods are better for them. But how about feeding those exact same foods cooked instead of raw?

Any cooking that you do at home will have an effect on the food and it will reduce the availability of nutrients and enzymes your dog could get from his diet. Heat and light change the chemical structure of food and its nutrients at the molecular level. Even at the physical level we can see this, as the colour and shape can change too.

Those that have heard me speak know that I am not against feeding cooked real food, at least lightly cooked. It is processed food that contains the great volume of the more toxic fats mentioned below, and dramatically heat proteins into un-recognisable, often toxic states. This can apply to dry kibbles, tins and plastic tray types. Tins are usually cooked less than plastic tray foods, with kibbles being the most heated and processed.

Heated protein is vastly different from raw protein, and the higher the temperature the greater the structure gets altered. A dog is biologically designed to function on as pure a protein as possible, one that is unchanged by heat. There are a variety of enzymes found in food that are needed by the dog's gut system for digestion. These will be affected at temperatures of 110f and more. This temperature breaks the molecular bond of the enzymes, making them unavailable and challenging food digestion. There are also some vitamins and minerals that are destroyed by heat and

light, this too will have an effect on your dog's health as vitamins and minerals are essential to the dogs ability to use nutrients to perform tasks like building bones, making new cells, liver function and hormone regulation and all the other internal functions of his/her body.

By far the most influential change that occurs during a cooking process though, is the change to the structure of fats and the important essential fatty acids that are found in dietary fats. Dogs are not designed to utilise glucose from carbohydrates as a primary source of energy. A dog's body take its energy source from oxidizing appropriate proteins and from certain types of fats. The energy is used for movement, for cellular respiration, for brain activity and the general functioning of the all parts and cells of the dogs body. Which makes it vital that the correct proteins, enzymes, fats and fatty acids are available in their diet. Fats are hugely unstable in heat and even in light. Their structures are very easily altered during any cooking process. Most of you will have heard of the term 'omega 3', it has even become quite a buzz word. However questioning the level of omega 3 in a diet is just the start of an understanding into the value of fats in the diet.

Fatty acids come in 2 main types. Cis-Fatty Acids which are the natural form, recognized by the dog's cells and Trans-Fatty Acids which are created when exposed to heat, light and oxygen. Cis-Fatty Acids are converted by the dog's body into useful and usable hormones which protect cell walls, keeping them flexible, in order to let nutrients pass in and toxins to pass out of the cell. As

well as protecting from invading viruses or bacteria they also very importantly regulate the 'inflammatory' and 'anti-inflammatory' reactions your dog will have within his body. Trans Fatty Acids are not recognized by the dogs cells and are toxins. They form fatty deposits in the dog's body and in its blood vessel walls. They allow for the cell walls to become inflexible and susceptible to viruses, bacteria and an imbalance of nutrients. They also crucially compete for space within the hormone conversion pathways that regulate the dog's inflammatory and anti-inflammatory reactions.

Meaning dogs are left susceptible to inflammatory 'allergic' reactions to internal or external toxins, and are unable to self regulate inflammation caused during injury or joint wear and tear.

With the understanding of this information it is easy for us to see why it is that more dogs are being diagnosed with inflammatory diseases such as arthritis, dermatitis and even cancer. By providing your dog with food that can be broken down into useful fatty acids and nutrients that his body can use to stay healthy you will be providing your dog with a far higher chance to thrive and stay healthy even into old age.

Cis fatty acids: fats in the natural states create anti-inflammatory hormones.

Trans fatty acids: fats in a heat altered state block Cis pathways and create an excess of unnatural inflammatory hormones.

Omega-3 (a Cis) (Alpha Linolenic Acid): converts to EPA/DHA to create anti-inflammatory hormones and balance levels of Omega 6

Omega-6 (a Cis) (Linoleic Acid): converts to GLA to create one type of anti-inflammatory but also creates a natural state inflammatory. Natural state inflammation is needed inside the body as a marker for healing to begin occurring.

Omega-3 and the Cis fat pathways are involved with: skin, joints, the nervous system, intestinal movement, the kidneys being able to function, and much more.

Omega-3 is not on the 'Complete and Balanced' guidelines for adult pet food, only for pups up to 18 months – I find this amazing as they are so needed by the dog.

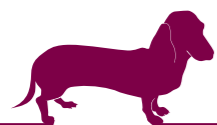
Labelling laws allow processed pet foods to write 'Duck with Omega-3' or 'made with salmon for Omega-3'. There are no lies here, in its unheated state the meat types do contain high omega-3. The final product is not mentioned in those claims. It can seem confusing to read 'contains Omega 3, but in reality these processed foods do not.



Balanced Diet

"Our philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices we make... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility"

– Eleanor Roosevelt



Creating your dogs real food meals

Now I have empowered you with the knowledge of why raw and real food works best for dogs. I hope you will enjoy researching more into raw feeding your dogs and watching them grow and develop, into healthy balanced canine friends.

Here are a few basic food options that you can consider for your dog to get you started.

What to Feed

Meats: Game meats tend to be better for dogs than farm meats. Choose from: rabbit, pheasant, deer, chicken, turkey, lamb, beef, goat, duck, elk, even kangaroo - if you are in the right country.

Meats both on and off the bone are fantastic, whole carcasses will be relished. These are great at keeping your dog's teeth nice and clean too. Organ meats/offal are a fantastic way to provide nutrients, such as heart, lung, and liver. Be aware that these meats are quite rich so start with smaller amounts. Green tripe is useful to consider as it contains valuable enzymes, beneficial bacteria and amino acids. Source yourself some where the animals have been grass fed and it has been washed to ensure it is safe for human handling. Dogs can also enjoy fish, including the bones, when given raw or lightly cooked. Fish such as sardines or mackerel can be a fantastic source of the essential omega fatty acids, they are always better fresh than tinned but tinned is suitable at times too.

Salmon is better avoided if it is from parts of Canada, the USA and southern Brazil, due to a potentially toxic bacteria called *Neorickettsia helminthoeca*.

Vegetables: these need to be either liquidised, finely grated or lightly steam cooked (boiling for more than a couple of minutes destroys the nutrition content). An easy way to get the balance right is to include almost all above ground, more plant like, vegetables, for instance kale, spinach or broccoli, which all grow above ground. Occasionally adding below ground vegetables such as carrots or sweet potato.

Not all dogs enjoy vegetables, but in countries such as the USA where the meat is heavily industrially farmed they can be the make or break in terms of vitamins and mineral content, and offer antioxidants, and detox supporting nutrition.

Fruits: fed in smaller quantities some fruits can be very useful and beneficial to your dog. Especially those that support the growth of gut bacteria such as berries, blueberries raspberries, strawberries, and banana too. Avoid grapes and apple pips as these are known to contain toxic substances to dogs.

Additions: live sheep' or goat's yoghurt is a great addition. This will be lapped up by most dogs and could promote gut bacteria balance. Goat's kefir is also a powerful way to introduce beneficial bacteria.

Adding Supplements

A dog fed on a healthy, variety-based, raw diet shouldn't need much in the way of supplements. The correct nutrients should be available in the food itself. However, from time to time, perhaps during a period of illness or if you are converting your dog to raw food after a time eating pre-made dog food, then you may want to include an additional immune boosting probiotic supplement or a supplement of the essential fatty acids (the omegas).

There are some probiotics on the market that are designed and manufactured specifically for dogs which are worth looking into. Currently, only one type of probiotic bacteria is used in veterinary supplements, but the commercial varieties contain a much broader spectrum and at least begin to recognise the value of including multi strains of probiotic bacteria.

Essential omega-3 fatty acids are best given as a fish oil rather than the flaxseed oils of which DUH is popular for humans. Although flax is usable by dogs, fatty acids from fish oil are far easier for them to utilise. Fish oils are best given as multi fish oils often labelled as EPA supplements, as opposed to simply cod liver oil on its own. Cod liver oil contains far less omega-3, which is the aim of the supplementation, and also could lead to an overdose of Vitamin A if given regularly.

Supplements of green superfood plants such as

chlorella could also be of use especially at times of illness or when you are changing your dog over to his new diet. I have clients who swear that including chlorella in their dog's diet works as a breath freshener for them. If the breath is fresh then it is a sure sign the gut system is also fresh too!

Unless you have had a specific veterinary diagnosis of a certain mineral or vitamin deficiency that needs addressing, I would advise avoiding supplementation with specific single nutrients. The body uses all nutrients in a synergistic fashion. This means that many nutrients are needed for the absorption and utilisation of other nutrients, nothing works alone. For example calcium does very little without meeting up with magnesium, supplementing with just calcium could thus be a waste of time and money.

Supplements that make plain pet minces a 'complete' meal

These supplements are designed to be added to plain pet minces to make up the rest of the nutrition and ingredients they may need. There are a few different versions on the market, each with their own specialism, so do take a look at them. As long as variety is fed to your dog, using these is a great, not to mention an easy option to add nutrition to your dog's ground mince meals. I have included some good brands in the resources section.

How much food do I give to my dog daily?

The general rule in the real, or raw, pet feeding world is that your dog should have around 2%-5% of their body weight per day.

So you will need to get your dog weighed to know where to start. For small dogs, they often need the high end of %, like 5% of their body weight. For bigger dogs, the less the % they need.

Just as with yourself and your family, the best way to know if your dog individually needs a bit more, or even a bit less, than the 2% - 5% a day is to keep an eye on their physical body, activity levels and behaviour. Some large breed dogs can even be fed around 1.5% of their body weight and thrive very well.

It is about starting and working out what works for your dog as an individual. If you are feeding too much or too little you can easily see this and make changes. Even a few mouthfuls of real food already contains more nutrition than the processed food you have been feeding, so in this initial week or the first few weeks of starting, the last thing you need to do is worry you are not giving enough actual nutrition.

Obviously if your dog is particularly active he or she may need more. But again this will change on a daily basis, so the best thing you can do is keep an eye on their physical body, activity levels and behaviour yourself and adjust accordingly. As with all diets, puppies and pregnant bitches will need more food. I have included a puppy feeding chart here too, as a guideline.

As an example, I might give my Terrier: a couple of poultry drumsticks or wings a day, plus some goat's yoghurt with a sprinkling of ground flaxseed and home grown parsley; or perhaps a big handful of green tripe plus liquidised greens. This is in addition to her chewing at her bone on and off during the day, from which she will also be obtaining nutrients.

A friend of mine with large Husky types might give them each per day: 1 turkey thigh, 200g ox liver, and pulsed vegetables; or 4 chicken carcasses each, a lamb's heart, and pulsed fruit & vegetables. She also likes to give her dogs egg, cottage cheese, live yoghurt, coconut oil, and garlic.

Some advocates of raw feeding recommend feeding only raw meat and meaty bones, without supplements or vegetables. Others recommend a diet with raw meat, meaty bones, vegetables and additions, such as live yoghurt. **The best thing to do is work out what is right for your dog as an individual.** Consider your dog's diet history. For instance, dogs that have been fed processed food for a while may at first benefit from additions and vegetables for the extra nutrients.

I always do my best to find organic meat for my dog. This can be more expensive, but avoids any residual toxins from the growth hormones or chemicals the animals in an intensive farming environment may have been given.

Although you can never be 100% sure that you are feeding a completely pure toxin free diet, feeding a raw diet is so much more immune building that it is much less likely your dog would actually be harmed by any stray toxins from the chemical biased environment us humans are creating here on planet earth.

For those of you who really don't want to make the food up yourself there are now several companies who make up raw food meals and will deliver it to you. They are listed in the resources section at the end of this book.

Guidelines to how much to give puppies and adult dogs

Puppies aged 0 – 3 weeks

They should be drinking their mother's milk to obtain essential nutrients, enzymes, microbiome and essential fatty acids.

Puppies aged 3 – 4 weeks

These pups need 3 meals a day. Feed around 8% of the puppy's body weight per day. Mash the foods up very well. If the pups are not still drinking milk from their mother, try adding goat's milk to their diet too, as this is very easy for puppies to digest and is full of nutrients. Puppies need a little help digesting their foods at this stage, so sometimes it is better for them to have the feeds 'lightly' cooked. This will mimic the regurgitation that mother dogs provide for their pups in the wild, making the food more digestible for them.

Puppies aged 6 weeks -12 weeks

At this stage you can begin to introduce a small amount of raw bone within their meal, for instance chicken wings, but no harder raw bones just yet. Most pups will begin to wean from their mother at 3/4 weeks and be weaned completely at 7/8 weeks. They will still benefit from some of their mother's milk even up to 12 weeks old, if she has any milk left or any tolerance left to feed them! (please read the answer to the question 'will my dog choke on bones,' in the questions section)

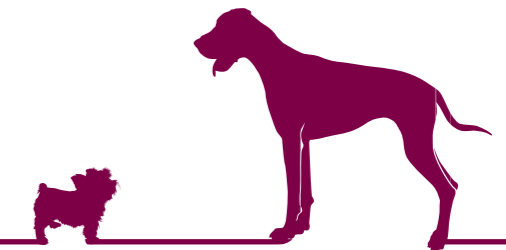
Puppies aged 12 weeks and over (3 months)

Feed 2 meals a day. You should be able to feed all the variety of adult raw foods by this stage. Introduce raw meaty bones now too such as ribs, trachea chews or necks.

Puppies aged over 4 months

Begin to reduce the amount the puppy eats per day. Aiming to reach 6% - 4% of body weight by the time the puppy is 6 months old.

Continue to gradually reduce the % of food your puppy eats as they grow up. Until you have reached the % you wish to feed them as an adult



Meaty Bones

If you do one thing after reading this book I hope it will be this: Enjoy watching your dog's delight and gratitude at being able to chew away at a raw bone.

The act of chewing on a bone encourages a great natural plaque clearing, teeth cleaning action for your dog. Bones also contain an amazing array of nutrients readily available for your dog's cells and systems.

I'm sure we can all agree on Calcium but just look at the whole host of others too!

Raw meaty bones are a staple part of a dog being fed a Raw diet. Should you choose to purchase packaged raw food meals be sure to also include bones in the dog's diet, both for the nutritional

benefits and importantly, the behavioural considerations.

The benefits of chewing are widely known as relaxing and confidence boosting. Endorphins are released when dogs chew, travelling round the body and counteracting stress hormones. Endorphins are part of the dog's Limbic system, which is hugely involved in the formation of their memories and emotions. The mouth area itself is linked with the Limbic system and is often referred to as the 'seat of emotions'. Chewing on bones will also help your dog to release any built up stress or tension in his jaw and mouth area. In that way also influencing how he feels and behaves on a daily basis.

What's in bones?

Calcium, Iron
Magnesium
Manganese
Boron, Phosphorous
Vitamin K2
Glucosamine
'Essential Fatty Acids
(Omega's)'
Anti-oxidants
Vitamins A, D, E
'Unaltered Amino
Acids'
Valuable Enzymes



Getting the Balance right

First of all, I want to make it clear that if your dog has been on a processed food for a length of time before you discovered the possibility of feeding real, actual food to them, you have already not been feeding them a balanced, or complete diet! And yet here they are, here with you. They have already been missing out on vital nutritional elements that keep their body in optimum health, so immediately, you giving them even just a bowl of pet mince means you are already giving them more than they have previously received.

I feel very strongly, and this does come from many years of experience, that the fascination with balance is often:

1) Extremely limiting: some people never feed real food due to the fear, even though for years the dog has been eating unbalanced processed food anyway.

2) Anxiety causing: many owners worry so much that the dog picks up on this, leading to anxiety in themselves, and often skin conditions which are highly linked to feelings of anxiety.

I have supported quite a lot of dog owners to solve their dog's skin issues by simply reducing their own anxieties, especially those over food, feeding their dog and getting things in all aspects of their life 'correct'.

3) Not even a biological truth: everything, literally everything, every organ, every process, every function in your dog's body (and yours for that matter) is set up to create balance. From the hormonal level to the organs' unique and combined functions, the digestive

system balancing as a whole, and right down to the individual cells themselves which each have the ability to remove toxins and retain needed nutritional elements, to create cellular balance.

Your dog's body can and constantly does balance itself. We have to understand this, and provide the diet that allows for this ever-changing internal flexibility of 'balance' to occur.

In the past there have been sets of raw feeders that would only give chicken carcasses, or only give tripe and oats or similar diet ideas. Whilst those very unvaried diets did lead to imbalances, if your focus is on simply two things - variety (as much as you can provide your dog with), and a focus on feeding the nutritional elements rather than each individual nutrient in balance - then, and only then, can you know you are feeding what they need.

Our job is to feed to encourage as much flexibility as possible, at the cellular level, organ level and the dog's body as a whole. Not to balance every single meal, or even daily feed.

Our need for certainty, and control, leads us to feel more anxiety and fear than we need to feel, in life and in feeding real food to our dogs too.

Our yearning to understand and 'know' more about dog nutrition can also lead us down the path of misunderstanding what really matters to the dog's body.

Life, and dog feeding, is actually much simpler than our minds want to make it.

Start by feeding a ready-made real food from a company you trust (see which raw food company is 'the best'?).

Then once you are settled in to feeding this way, used to remembering the defrost, and to order it etc. then you can think about creating your own meals at home. Initially, why not match the ratios of meat/bone/plants in the food you were feeding from the supplier, and then you can (slowly if need be) introduce more variety. Follow the basic guidelines outlined in this book.

Lastly, learn about how the dog's body works to balance itself. This way you become aware of when to add supplements, or specific food types for your dog as an individual. This can happen over time, as you get to know your dog's ailments and habits; you can also fast track it with nutritional therapy study.

No one dog is the same as the next. THERE IS NO HOLY GRAIL OF AN ULTIMATE BALANCED MEAL FOR DOGS. None, yet we all crave it.

Even if we did somehow create a holy grail of a balanced canine meal, it would not be applicable because every single dog is at a different starting point. In as plain a way to describe as I can, this means if your dog started with less of certain nutrients, feeding a 'balanced' food or diet will never make up for that. It will only ever bring it to the level that is considered 'correct for all dogs'. Some nutrients can be stored, but many, in fact most, are not and so if fed a diet someone else has

decided is right for 'dogs' your individual dog is never going to be in balance with the nutrients they started off deficient in.

I do hope this is understandable.

After many years in this field I am very aware of the fear surrounding getting things right.

It is high time we recognised that alone is a processed dog food way of thinking. If we are to move away from kibbles and processed foods, we must also shift our understanding to that of nature. Nature has ingenious ways of balancing itself, that is the bit we must learn to trust and understand when switching to a real or raw food diet, and trying to create balance is still kibble mentality.

Trust is indeed a huge part of making the switch, but the pay-off is absolutely worth it.

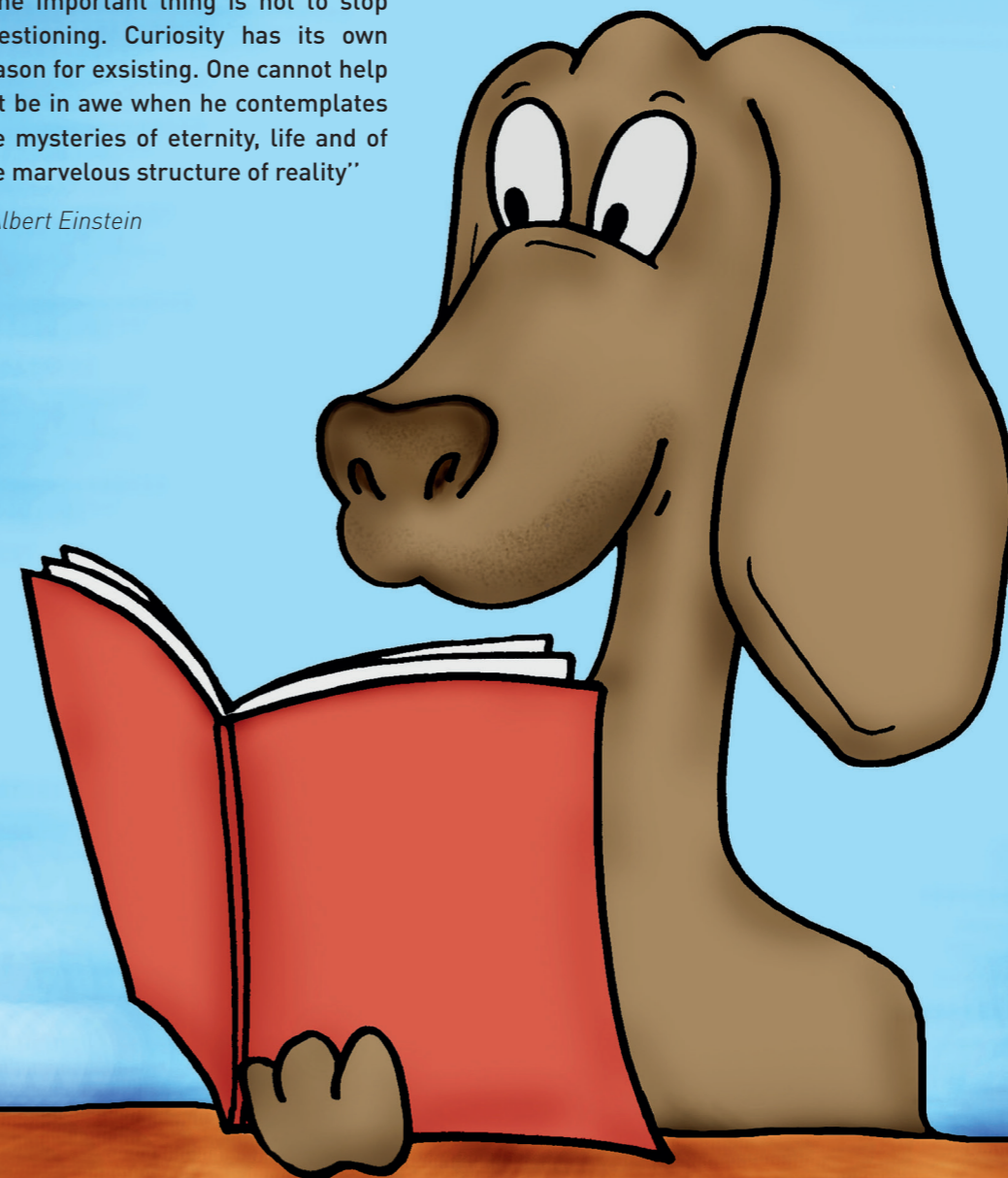
Please also read the section on Complete foods and diets to understand why different ways of feeding real/raw food for 'all dogs', are recommended on sources of guidance such as online groups or literature.



Common Concerns & Questions

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, life and of the marvelous structure of reality"

– Albert Einstein



Will my dog get diarrhoea if I simply switch over to a raw diet?

Every dog is different, because their gut system will be at a different stage of growth and well being. Some dogs will benefit from simply switching straight over to raw whereas others may need a more gradual change. If you are worried about the change then do it gradually, introducing more raw ingredients to his food bowl over the course of a week or so, letting them become used to digesting it.

It is more common for older dogs or dogs that have had a previous unhealthy diet to be less able to digest a new raw diet. This is because over time their gut system will have become a little redundant on the enzyme and digestion front, and like all

parts of a physical body if something is not used it becomes dormant or simply not at optimum. The wrong kind of foods entering the body can also influence a lack of production of the enzymes. With the right nutrients and care of the gut system these enzymes can return though, all is not lost!

The main thing is that, if your dog simply has a slightly looser stool, don't panic! This may well be his body getting used to the new food and passing out any toxins from the previous food types. If it persists, or if his demeanour changes, or if it contains blood or if you are worried then do see a vet.

Will my dog choke on bones?

Cooked bones should not be fed for this very reason. Especially smaller brittle bones, such as poultry bones. Raw uncooked bones are much more flexible and digestible. As with all foods and treats and even chewing of your slippers to be honest, there is a risk of choking.

The benefits to the dog of eating a raw diet including bones completely outweigh any of our personal fears of them choking, especially when bones are fed sensibly and the dog kept an eye on. The more your dog trusts they will be routinely provided real food the less enthusiastic they become to grab and swallow real meat bones.

It is common for dogs to swallow smaller meal-time raw-bones in one go, such as chicken wings. Unless you own a brachycephalic breed (whom we

have bred with shorter tracheas) this is not, I repeat not, a concern. The biology at the beginning of this book explains why.

Avoid bones that are could be harder than your dog's teeth. If your dog has been fed a processed dog food for a while their teeth may not be in tip top condition, leaving them more prone to damage. Bones from the weight bearing joints of an animal are harder than bones from the neck for instance. Start off with lamb ribs or even marrow bones rather than knuckle bones. Avoid vertebrae bones to begin with too, they can be far too small.

Raw bones are always found in the freezers of pet stores – do not buy the cooked ones on market stalls or pet store shelving!

What should I give as treats when feeding this natural diet?

This is a great question. Nobody wants to undo the benefits of a natural diet with unnatural treats.

Absolutely avoid: rawhide treats, as these are incredibly hard for the dog's digestive system to break down, can be fatty and full of colourings, and have even been known to cause gut blockages. They are also created using lots of chemical processes leaving these unhealthy, potentially toxic chemicals in the 'treat'. Treat simply is not the right word for these items.

Another type to avoid are the big cooked bones often called Postman's Legs or knuckle bones, found in big boxes on the ground in pet stores. These are dipped in a huge amount of fats, and chemicals,

commonly leading to gut issues. They are also made with cooked bone and so can splinter and cause issues in the mouth, gums or internally.

Always check the preservative of so called 'natural' treats too, as many have a preservative called, for short abbreviation, BHA or BHT. These are used to stop the fats in products going rancid, and the treats discolouring as a result. They have been shown to have possible carcinogenic effects.

I would be looking at treating with: Grain-free biscuits (noting any allergen/intolerance ingredients on an individual basis), making your own liver cake or liver treats (easy recipe at the end of the book), using small bits of real food that your dog enjoys.

Is Raw Feeding more Expensive?

As with all products you buy, it depends on where you buy it. Be savvy! Shop around for the best deals, grab the marked down liver or kidneys from the reduced shelves in supermarkets. Choose fish from the freezer (usually cheaper) or when it's on special deals. Stock your freezer up if need be.

Feeding a raw diet shouldn't be any more expensive than a mid-range quality pre-made dog food, in fact it will be cheaper than the expensive brands often marketed at dogs with gut system or digestive issues! Feeding a raw diet will be more expensive than the cheap and cheerful pre-made dog food sacks but isn't your dog worth so very much more than that anyway?

It is now possible to grow your own vegetables in even the smallest of gardens (or window boxes!) and definitely easy to grow herbs such as parsley or sage.

Bones can usually be obtained from a butcher, although it is becoming tougher because many of them are restricted with health and safety laws and often have to throw the bones away rather than give you them. It's worth persevering though, as explained earlier bones are quite possibly the loveliest most caring thing you can ever provide for your dog!

There are also a number of companies now providing frozen raw food too with various price ranges.

My dog buries and digs up his bones...

What fun! So you have a happy dog... but maybe a dodgy looking lawn! Although common, not all dogs will do this. As digging is actually part of a dog's emotional instincts and release of tension the ones that do it should be encouraged rather than discouraged. They can easily be trained to use a specific part of the garden to do their burying. Contact a friendly positive dog trainer who can help you with this if need be. Although Clicker training a command of 'go to your place' and a good dose

of patience can also work wonders. Despite our human concerns over the cleanliness of the bone, your dog will often prefer it to be to grubbier it can be, full of enzymes from the soil! If you are worried don't 'clean it' but simply blanch it in boiling water to kill off some of the 'germs' you may be worried about. The further into raw feeding you get the more your dog's gut system will have healed and be able to cope with grubby looking buried and dug up bones!

Won't there be flies around my dog's raw food?

It is not common for dogs to leave raw food in the bowl. Most can't believe their luck at finally being fed something so delicious, and that their bodies are designed to function on. Should your dog leave some

of their dinner the best thing is to take it up and give it back to them later. Note also that the dogs stomach pH is much higher than ours, at 1-2ph and is thus far more capable to destroying most bacteria.

My dog doesn't seem to know what this Raw food is! Could I warm it up or perhaps heat-seal the meat in a frying pan?

Some dogs are led by a higher scent drive than others when it comes to their food. These dogs seem to not be keen on eating cold, bland smelling food. In these cases I would recommend firstly taking the food out of the fridge and letting it reach room temperature before feeding it to your dog. (don't forget to cover it to protect from flies or, other hungry creatures, while doing so!).

Secondly, you could even try cutting into the meat and letting the juices run through for them to smell. Also rubbing interesting smelling herbs onto the meats or rubbing a little garlic may make a difference and help the food smell more appealing to such dogs. (check any herbs used are suitable for dogs!). Please do also refer to the section on feeding home cooked food for more information about heating your dogs dinner.

Why does my dogs food say it contains everything my dog needs, if it may not do?

This is a question I too raised when I first began to learn about the foods that a dog is biologically designed to eat. I knew that the labelling laws for human food were constantly being checked for authenticity and to make sure all the relevant information on ingredients and nutritional content were included. I also knew that the advertising standards agency were the organization who work to make sure that all claims either in advertising or on packaging is honest and truthful. So why was it that claims of dog food being nutritionally complete or natural were included on the pre-made cooked dog food, if that wasn't the case?

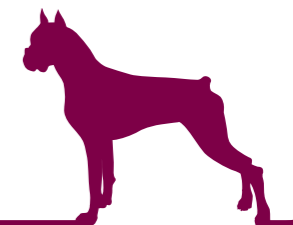
One answer lies in the fact that the labelling laws that surround dog foods are much less stringent than the human labelling laws. Dog food companies employ bright marketing staff who work out how to inventively promote dog foods to make them seem appealing to owners, and easily still keep within the minimal laws that do exist.

UK trading standards labelling laws state that all dog foods have to be classed as either complete or complementary. The word 'Complete' simply means that the food does not require any additional feed added to it, for instance with a pre-made dry food, and 'Complementary' means the feed does require the addition of another feed, such as with a mixer biscuit that contains no protein. It is not a statement that the food is full of all the enzymes, micro nutrients and digestible nutrients that a dog's body needs for growth and health.

It is interesting to note that the criteria a dog food has to meet to be classed as complete is only officially regulated prior to the manufacturing and cooking process. Which means that by the time the food reaches its packaging the nutrients originally present in the ingredients, will have been compromised and altered. What is going into the packet is completely structurally different to what was intended!

Very little funding is made available (at least in UK) for the regulation of pet foods after they have been manufactured. Any work done to check up on food claims puts humans first, then farm animals and pet food at the end of the list.

The original guideline of nutritional requirements set by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) is the general guideline used by pet food companies worldwide. It is not a complete breakdown of the chemical enzymatic requirements. It does not take into account dogs as individuals, or the fact that some nutrients work synergistically with others. It was also originally set to levels that are classed as the absolute minimum requirements for a dog. Yet to be classed as complete a dog food only has to contain 'some of' the essentials and not necessarily those essentials even at the minimum requirement level.



How do I transition my dog over to this new diet?

The general advice for transitioning between dog foods is to do so slowly, gradually swapping the dry foods over, until the switch is completed. This advice does not have to be the case for dogs switching onto a real food diet.

In fact if your dog has been labelled or diagnosed as a dog with a 'sensitive stomach' they need to be switched onto real food even more so. In this case clearly their stomach (which is kind of a term meaning all the gut system in this case) is not doing well on what they are already eating. Feeding them real meat will increase the acidity of their actual stomach, and repopulate the intestines with good bacteria, leaving them much better able to cope with whatever goes inside.

The reason this happens is explained in the biology section of this book.

Could this diet improve my dogs health?

In a word, Yes! It goes without saying that a diet rich in the nutrient chemistry and nutritional elements will improve its chances of producing the enzymatic reactions, hormones, molecules and cellular states to stay healthy.

The gut system and the mucosal lining of it are the first line of defence for your dog's immune system, screening out potentially harmful substances and toxins from reaching the blood stream. Your dog's

My general advice is simply to make the switch, do not fear real food. There are far worse issues with processed foods.

If your dog has a little detox in terms of his stools this is not a bad thing (although obviously if this continues for days they made need support with supplements such as probiotics).

If you do want to do a gradual transition for your own peace of mind rather than the dog's, then for some dogs this works. Some dogs have trouble dealing with meals that contain both processed and real foods. It is better for those dogs, to feed the different food types in separate meals, feeding the processed food early evening so they have far longer for it to be digested before the good stuff is eaten in the morning.

gut lining is essentially their immune system, around 10% or so is related to their internal bone marrow but the gut lining is the place immunity is created.

(Also a reason vaccines shouldn't be given if you dog has had a poorly gut recently).

The gut lining is to be honest one the most important parts of your dog's health all round. It was proven

by Dr Michael Gershon that 90% of the behavioural hormone serotonin is also created in the gut lining, so if we want calm happy dogs it becomes even more pivotal to nourish and support their gut lining. Inflammation in a dog's body can also be influenced by the state of the dogs' digestive system, and also by the types of fatty acids that are present in the diet fed to them.

Another of the most popular supplements on the market for dogs is Glucosamine. This is generally marketed as being great for their joints as indeed Glucosamine is involved in the creation of collagen, ligaments, cartilage and tendons. What is not often mentioned is that Glucosamine is also the amino sugar that dogs use as a precursor to creating the fluid that coats the mucous membrane in the gut lining. It is also used to create the IGA antibody that is contained in the gut lining. With a supplementation of Glucosamine you are not only helping your dog's joints but also his gut defences, which when healthy, will help your dog's cells to react in a less inflammatory way throughout his body.

Raw meaty bones will contain plenty of Glucosamine, plus the other amino sugars and nutrients that work with it.

There are nowadays branches of science which specifically study the links between the digestive system, the immune system and the function of the brain.

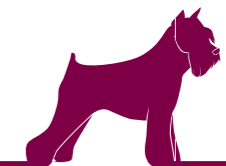
The most interesting currently is the research into gut microbiome. It is emerging that the microbiome

are the key factors in all creatures (so you and your dog too) being in optimum health and even curing ailments or disease. Microbiome, or more simply gut bacteria, have been shown to play a role in response to medications, seasonal allergies, behaviours, inflammations and not to mention actual digestive health itself.

In many ways the veterinary sciences are still catching up with human sciences. As the veterinary community do so, they will be better able to research, for instance, the many different strains of bacteria that may be beneficial to dogs. Plus ways to get those beneficial bacteria supplements through the dog's high Ph stomach acid to the jejunum in order for them to be useful.

I have been lucky to be part of a raw research team looking into why it might be that dog owners report such a vast array of ailments or issues clear up when they switch their dog to this way of feeding. The simplest answer is that due to the presence of the nutritional elements in the raw or real food diet your dog can only but get healthier when fed this way. The elements are different to actual nutrients, although they are more in abundance to.

I teach the elements in depth on my course and a little more on my seminars.



Why do so many dogs seem to do well, or stay healthy on processed food?

I guess that comes down to how you define healthy! Our dogs are unable to tell us should they be suffering from various aches and pains, even a headache or perhaps feeling a lack of energy. Think about how you begin to feel if you eat too much, get bloated or eat lots of high fat or sugary foods. Your dog could well be feeling the same.

Unless we can see an external symptom or a major difference in our dog's stools we can continue thinking they are 'fine' on a certain food until something happens to show us otherwise.

The diagnoses of allergic reactions and inflammatory disease in dogs, including arthritis and cancer, has risen steadily the longer that processed dog's foods have been available to feed (since around the 1960's).

In the 20 something years I worked at a kennels our small medication shelf turned into a virtual canine pharmacy, with almost every dog coming in on some kind of veterinary drug for something. This cannot be un-related to diets lacking in the nutritional elements needed for the body to adapt and overcome disease.

Dogs missing out all the nutrients its nervous system needs are thus more likely to show behaviours such as anxiousness, nervousness, over excitability or aggression.

The change in dog feeding over the past 50 years or so could well be playing a role in the rise of behaviour issues in dogs, way beyond the obvious colourings or carbs links.

So, on the whole it seems that dogs are not actually any healthier being fed these kinds of foods. Because dogs live a shorter life span than ourselves it has taken a much shorter time for the effects of a processed, purely mechanistic diets effects to be noticed. I personally think it is an important influential factor in the health of us humans too, and that perhaps we should consider eating much more raw food ourselves too... although perhaps not raw meat.

As a footnote, and those that know me will understand this extra addition. How you as an owner, and your dog feel emotionally will play a huge role in prevention of or overcoming disease. Happier emotions can even be anti-aging, so far each of the dogs I have met who lived to a healthy old age on kibble were allowed abundant opportunities to ground emotionally, they were not 'over-trained' or living with high owner expectations, they socialised with other dogs regularly and had a lot of fun with their owners. I do recognise that health is a multi-faceted field.



Why avoid processed food?

The internet is rather full of information on why processed pet food could be 'bad'. But ultimately it's common sense that processing with heat and light will change the molecular structure of any food, and remove it from its natural state. The state all creatures, even you as a human, are designed by nature to function healthily on.

Unfortunately almost all processed pet food manufacturers use cooking methods that go higher than 105°C which then changes the fats to the more toxic molecular structures. (as described further in the Fats section of this book.) Most manufacturers actually use much higher temperatures than 105°C, and indeed when you go to the websites that offer the sale of kibble creating machines (known as extruders) the selling point for these are the high temperatures they can reach.

Processed foods also have to be cooked at these higher temperatures to comply with the microbiome requirements stating processed pet food must be fully sterilised. The food is essentially 'dead', no vibrancy is allowed for.

Most processed pet foods are made of what is known as meat meal. This can be labelled as: meat and animal derivatives, meat and bone meal, chicken meal (or another meat type), deboned chicken (or other meat type), chicken breast and even fresh chicken – fresh meat can be made into a meat meal before being made into pet food and labelling laws can be worked with to make a food look as if it was

made with something more appealing.

Marketing teams have all sorts of ways to make it seem like fresh meat is used, but that is simply not practical, or possible, for the pet food manufacturing machines processes.

Meat meal is created by heating meat into a powder state first, and then chemically treating it to have the fats removed. This is before the processing used to make it into the shapes we see in the bag or bowl. Processed pet food needs to stay in its packaging quite a while, so it is also sprayed with preservatives (even natural preservatives are still not good for our dogs). Many foods are also coloured as well with unnatural, or even natural but unwelcome food colourings – to be honest, I think this part is the one understanding many of us do have, that colourings are not so good for us, or our dogs.

The temperatures involved actually leave a few carcinogens in the pet foods too. Known as Advanced Glycation End-products (AGEs) and Heterocyclic Amines (HCAs), you can have a search online about these two and find quite a bit of info on why we humans shouldn't have BBQs as that cooking also creates these in meats we were going to eat.

So as well as ingredients you may already not be keen on, such as certain plants, legumes (peas, soya, etc.), grains, there are many other additions to processed food that are not so great.

This does apply to many tins and plastic tray type foods too. In fact a big note to log in your memory is that the plastic tray type foods are generally actually more cooked than cans/tins. The ingredients are cooked, piped in, and then cooked again, whereas for tins or cans raw ingredients are put in and then they are steam cooked. For some reason, the marketing behind plastic tray type foods has nailed it in terms of making them appear better, or more natural. One a few brands even claim very cleverly that they use fresh meats and so appear as if it is a bit like a homemade meal. The truth is they use fresh meat in their meat meal, which is an entirely different thing.

Ok, so we have some idea of what is IN processed foods that could be an issue. I would like to make

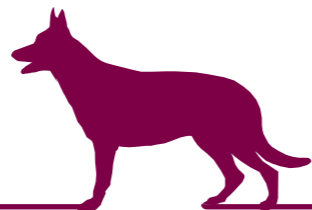
Why hasn't my vet told me about this? Some vets do support raw feeding:

Most holistic vets are also advocate this way of feeding due to their deep understanding of holistic approaches to health care. No vet gets nutritional training, not even holistic vets. Holistic vets are equally on their own journeys in understanding

a point that what is missing, i.e. what is NOT IN, is also just as much an issue, if not more of an issue. All fresh real food has certain elements in it that benefit the body, and as these are not specific nutrients I call them the nutritional elements. They are the parts of foods that keep the body thriving over simply surviving. They are the parts of fresh, raw foods that provide answers and reasoning behind the huge differences we see in health and wellbeing of our dogs, once we switch them to raw or even real food. Understanding what those are is the key to really cracking the pet food code and understanding how your dog's body works.

My course in Canine Nutritional Therapy will also discuss these in greater depth.

nutrition. Some are further along the research than others and offer seminars to share their findings. They also benefit from their pet biology knowledge, making their research more effortless than the majority of pet owner.



Understanding some of the labels on dog food packaging. The term:

Natural

This is a catch all phrase used on almost every brand of dog food these days. The reason for this is that as long as the ingredients, or the main ingredients, derive/grow in nature, then the term is allowed to be used during labelling.

As almost every cereal these days is actually a man-made creation, or adaptation of the original nature-based plant, I am not sure why and how so many of these get passed under that term, but they do.

This term is ironically the least useful term to look for if you are aiming for a natural diet for your dog i.e. unprocessed, and/or what they eat naturally.

Grain Free

This is a well-loved term amongst pet owners, and I admit even I would look for grain-free treats. That is an easy place you can eliminate or reduce grain. Very few UK brands of raw/real food have any grain in them, if just one.

In dry dog food, to be 'grain-free', the grain content is replaced with other bulking ingredients such as legumes, lentils, potatoes or other starches. Not all the replacements are good for dogs. In fact many are lacking in bio-availability and some have even been linked to heart conditions in dogs.

Despite appearing a fantastic option, going grain-

free is not much of a step towards achieving the benefits of a real meat diet. If your dog has allergies you must heal their gut, simply switching to grain free is not a long term solution.

Human-Grade

The term 'human grade' has made quite an impact on the pet food market in the past few years.

Most kibble dry foods, and a lot of canned/tray based foods are created with meat meal, a powdered, heat treated, chemically treated ingredient that can range from being made of solely one cut of meat type (e.g. chicken breast or other single meat source) to a mixture of meat sources or leftovers from our meat industry.

If a meat source used in a pet food is added fresh and whole, prior to its heat treatment to become the actual pet food, it does make sense that this is somewhat of a better quality than the meat meal ingredient. This is where the idea for the labelling term Human-Grade derived from.

Strictly speaking under the DEFRA regulations in the UK, all meat entering a pet food manufacturer is required to be immediately 'downgraded' as pet food category C. Anything leaving again, as a pet food, is not, legally speaking, a human-grade food but clearly if actual cuts of meat are used rather than a powdered meat meal as described above the food does contain meat cuts we humans eat.

Every section of meat going into pet food comes from human-grade sources. Animals are not bred specifically for each food industry. The pet food industry uses our leftovers, whether that is chicken breasts we have in excess, left over chicken carcass, or other animal body parts we don't usually want to eat. Bear in mind some countries do eat the bits we British so often find hard to bear too.

In the East for instance, they revere the darker sections of chicken meat, and quite rightly so, as those sections do contain more nutrition. We in the West tend to prefer the whiter sections of the chicken, even though we are missing out on the nutritional value.

What an owner wants from a meat cut is dependent on their subjective beliefs about eating certain cuts of meat. Human grade is therefore not a term with set ideals.

Probably the most important factor in the whole 'human grade' labelling scenario is when the term is used on processed or cooked food brands. In this scenario the companies are using meat cuts that are actually less nutritious for dogs.

This is due to the deficiency in minerals that many human-grade cuts of meat naturally have because they do not contain a bone content. Sometimes this mineral deficiency can show up pretty quickly as symptoms, whereas for some dogs it may take longer, even years, to show as a noticeable symptom or ailment.

Minerals such as magnesium are required for the nervous system, or calcium for the development and maintenance of bone structure in an acidic body.

Dogs are set up biologically to digest bone content and to obtain minerals from it.

If you are feeding a raw food brand, this will still have the bone content, even if it states human-grade on the label (with the exception of tripe as it is created from stomach which doesn't contain bone).

If you are seeing this on the label or marketing of a cooked pet food brand it is much more likely these brands did use bone free minces and this is where you need to be aware of potential future deficiencies.

In order to aim to include minerals in a pre-cooked dog food brands usually add what is called a pre-mix, essentially a powdered supplement, that contains a form of these minerals. The trouble with pre-mixes is they contain minerals derived from rock-based sources. Such as calcium and magnesium carbonate, oxide or citrate. These rock-based versions are not biologically available to dogs, in other words they either cannot absorb them or utilise them within their cells. Essentially in terms of your dog's health, there is little point adding them.



By adding the pre-mix, companies know they can ensure their pet food passes certain mineral inclusion guidelines and can then be labelled a 'complete' food, despite leaving the dog deficient in vital minerals as the types included are not bio-available.

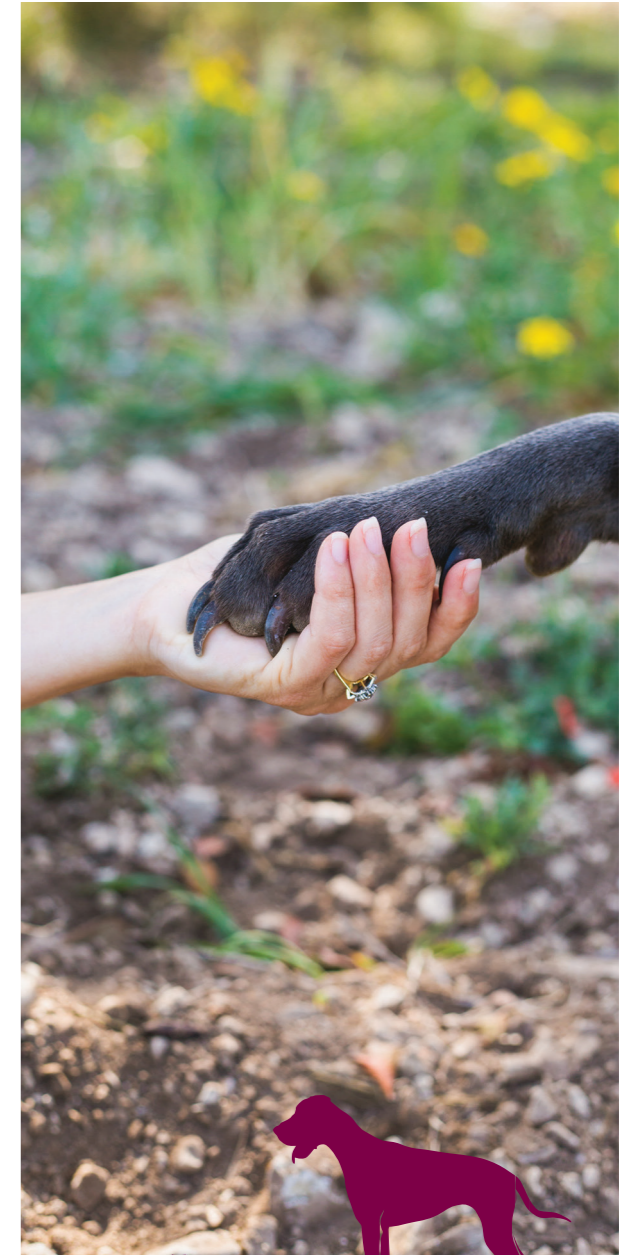
It is possible to include minerals from plant-based sources (which are bio-available) in pre-mixes but these are more expensive versions and, so far, do not seem to be used in many pet food pre-mixes. Certainly not the top 3 brands currently providing delivery of pre-cooked real meat dog foods.

Dogs need real, fresh meat with a bone content, either raw or lightly cooked. It is as simple as that. Ready-made pet minces are available with a bone content.

If you have to always cook your dog's pet minces and you may worry about the bone in it, with almost all raw meat companies the bone should be far too thinly blended to cause any issue at all - especially if you are only lightly cooking.

There may be a larger bit occasionally because this is a natural substance, just as when you eat fish some bones are longer or more solid than others. It is irresponsible to feel somebody else should continuously be checking the foods you feed your pet. Those bits can be easily removed. If your brand has so far always had this please switch brands.

More about feeding bone content, safely cooked or raw, is in the Feeding Bone section of this book.



What do the terms complete and balanced mean? The term:

In processed foods: (tinned, plastic trays or kibbles)

For a pet food to be labelled 'complete' it needs to have a minimum requirement of protein (can be any protein source – meat meals, legumes, soya, etc.), and to have what is called a pre-mix added, which is a powdered multi-vitamin and mineral supplement created by an outside company to match the original guidelines set by DEFRA/AAFCO. This of course means that no testing is needed to ensure it meets those guidelines.

If the pre-mix is used then the term 'balanced' is also allowed on the label. Although no testing will actually know that to be the case.

The unfortunate issue with pre-mixes is that almost all the ones used are of low bioavailability, meaning your dog is unlikely to actually be able to properly absorb, recognise or utilise the nutrients in their body.

With them though the food, having been so highly heated, cooked and processed, would not have very much of anything useful in it at all.

In raw food brands:

Some brands add a pre-mix and then can legally use the labelling terms 'complete and balanced'.

Most though are simply using the term 'complete', and taking their guidance from a belief set about what a dog generally needs to be having for a real food diet to be complete.

For instance how much: meat content, bone content, organ content, and plants (in some).

There are a few different belief sets in terms of the ratios of meat to bone content, whether plants should be added and how much or when to add organ meats (eg the term 80/10/10 is discussed a lot as is 60/40 and as is starting off with certain meat types only).

It can appear confusing if we do not understand that each time we are told that one way to feed is the 'right' way such a recommendation is only a belief-set and might not be the right way for your dog as an individual.

No one belief set is correct as there is no Holy Grail on a complete and balanced food for every dog. It is about getting started on a brand or belief-set and seeing if it works for your dog, and adjusting accordingly. If your dog individually needs more or less bone content for instance, then you will discover that from their stool quality.

You will no doubt find as well that your dog's body will change as it grows, develops, and ages. Our job

as owners is to feed them for as much flexibility as possible to allow for the changes, and we do this primarily by feeding real food in the first place.

The trick is not to listen to others about what works for their dogs, but to find out what works for yours. If you have been feeding processed food for any length of time, your dog has already been 'missing

Is organic meat better for my dog?

Once defrosted you can leave it in the fridge for as long as you want. However, I wouldn't feed it to your dog after a couple of days, or if it goes off before then. You can usually smell if it's not healthy anymore.

In a nutshell - yes, but organic minces are more expensive. If you cannot feed those, I encourage supplements to support your dog's immune system and detoxification processes.

Real meat is better for dogs, however it will carry residues of any antibiotics or hormone supplements given to the animal before it became part of the food chain.

Intensive farming is exactly that - pretty intense. The animals are in close proximity and disease is often more easily spread. The use of antibiotics is widespread, as well as other medications, vaccines, and all too often growth hormones.

out', so you will absolutely not be 'getting it wrong' by starting to feed real food from any reputable brand. I advise get started and then aim to discover what works for your dog individually.

Try not to get confused with the varied recommendations and focus on discovering what is right for your dog.

Organic farming is not completely void of these but has considerably less, if any at all. This will always depend on the batch, the animals, and the individual farm's chosen preferences.

Luckily for your dog, they do have internal processes that can support the removal of these toxins, although there is no certainty over the extent to which they can remove them, or whether a build-up of toxins still occurs. All you can do is do your best to support your dog in removing them.

Primarily, this is done by offering liver support, herbs, Chinese herbs or supplements. You can find these for sale online, and speak to a holistic vet if need be.

This is also an example of where plants in the diet can be beneficial. Certain plants will enhance your dog's digestive and detoxification processes, especially prebiotic plants, which I have listed in the Prebiotics section.

How long can raw dog food be left in the fridge for?

Once defrosted you can leave it in the fridge for as long as you want. However, I wouldn't feed it to your dog after a couple of days, or if it goes off

before then. You can usually smell if it's not healthy anymore.

What nasties could still be in the raw meat I am feeding?

Undeniably feeding real food, as opposed to processed food, provides the nutritional elements that create a healthier body. However nothing in life is completely perfect, as all ingredients that go into your dog's body will have traces, or elements, from their manufacture.

For instance, vegetables and fruits will absorb minerals from the soil they are grown in, and may also absorb pesticides sprayed on them too. Naturally, if those are in the foods then they go into your dog too. Hence the 'organic' movement.

Before an animal becomes meat as a product, the animal will have had varying degrees of exposure to antibiotics, steroids and other medications commonly used in farming.

Unless you are choosing an organic brand of real-meat raw food you simply cannot avoid this. These elements will also be in a higher concentration in processed dry foods.

For the most part dogs all over the world are eating food this way, as are we humans.

It thus makes it even more important for the dog to have healthy gut bacteria, nourished organs, and healthy fats to enable the cells to be fluid enough to let in goodness and let out toxins.

All we can do is our best, within the world that we humans have created for ourselves.

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As a footnote to this too, I personally also believe that we create our fears, for instance, if we did focus on parts of our dog's diet, or even our dog's whole diet as bad or worrying, energetically we could very easily contribute to this being the case.

Do your best and let go of as much worry as possible. Contribute peace and love to the situation instead.



What does it mean to lightly cook food?

If I said to you, "How long do you cook your turkey at Christmas?", those that are not vegans would answer "It depends on the size/weight of the turkey".

Asking how long to cook meat for, that's for your dog, is a similar story. Again, we look for certainty where there is none. We know what it would be like to cook the meat in front of us to our human standards of 'cooked', so if you reduce that by about half you are reaching lightly cooked. This isn't a

science, it's about working out what is right for your dog, using the type of oven or cooking method you have. Usually, I would stick the raw pet mince in an oven dish, with a lid to keep moisture inside. You can of course add it to a pan and move it about on the heat but you will, of course, not get as even a heat distribution that way.

For some fussy dogs adding a little garlic to the meat you are going to cook (in the safe doses) can improve fussiness too.

Should I give my dog a starvation day, or even a period of fasting?

Whether wolves, or wild dogs, would fast or not, fasting does have some benefits.

You are safe to fast your dogs for 24 or even 48 hours. It's often easier for the dog than it is for us to actively not feed them.

Fasting has built quite a following amongst dog owners and there are even owners who fast their dogs for more than a week. Even one or 2 days once a month can make all the difference to your dog.

Fasting reduces the work of the digestive system, giving it a chance to firstly catch up and secondly to balance microbiome with no food type at all interfering with the process.

Its other huge value is that it supports the dog's liver to detox toxins. The liver creates energy from fats. As soon as fat is eaten the liver stops removing toxins and switches to creating energy or dealing with the fats. The more time the dog's whole digestive system remains fat free, the more toxins are worked on instead.

If you can I would adopt the one day off a fortnight approach. If you would also like more info on trying a longer fast to see improvements in skin conditions, allergies, digestive complaints and even calmer behaviours, then a wonderful website run by Nora Lenz is included in the Resources section.

What if my dog won't eat for a day or two?

Unless your dog has a specific ailment or blood sugar level issue, it is not a problem if your dog doesn't want to eat for a day, or perhaps even two. Dogs know how they feel inside and instinctively avoid eating if they feel their digestion is not up to it. This is often at times of stress, a change to their environment, or during a period of nervousness. The

worst thing for their gut system's health is to force them to eat at these times, which is unfortunately what we often fall into the trap of doing.

This is different to fussiness of course, which is mentioned later on.

My dog is now on raw food, but they are still poorly. What can I do?

Firstly, book an online or in-person appointment with a holistic vet who understands raw or real food feeding.

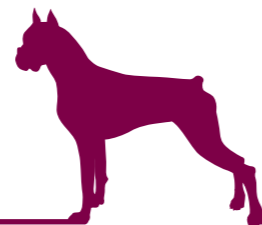
Often, symptoms are the result of your dog's body aiming to balance, or remove toxins from its system, as it is designed to do. Symptoms can appear worse at first, known as a 'healing crisis', and unless you speak to a holistic vet you will not easily gain clarity about that. If it is a 'healing crisis' this should ideally be allowed to happen, under holistic veterinary guidance. Secondly, it is ok to lightly cook raw food and serve meals cooked.

For some dogs the food simply being real actual food is good enough, they are after all only losing one of the main nutritional elements when we lightly cook their food, the enzyme quality. Many dogs find slightly cooked meals easier to digest.

No creature has evolved to eat processed foods. However, a dog fed processed food for a while, or a pup born from a bitch that was fed processed foods can lack digestive enzymes or have a compromised digestive system, and thus appear better off on processed foods.

This is something to work on though as the true place of health and immunity for your dog is found in the digestive system, in the health of their gut lining, the epithelial lining.

Simply switching back to processed food without aiming to heal their issues is more likely to lead to ailments further down the line.



Will a diet of real meat be too high in protein for my dog?

This may be a question related to kidney ailments, behaviour theories or something else entirely.

The key to understanding this is to understand the high water content of real, actual food.

This is higher in raw, as heating to any degree will of course reduce the water content, and at varying levels depending on the amount of heat and the length of time it's heated for.

Many people notice that their dogs drink less when on a real food, or raw food diet. This is because the water content is much higher, dependent on the living creature it came from, varying between 60-80% water content - it is often discussed that even a cooked steak is actually 70% water.

The higher water content means that the protein content is not as high as it appears at its 'dry weight' measurement. Pet food packaging and labelling requirements ask for a food to list its 'dry weight' measurement of protein. This means you

are not getting the true measurement of the protein content of the raw food. It can appear very high whereas the actual product, inside the packaging, is full of natural water. This allows for the dog to be receiving a much lower protein content than a dry kibble would provide them.

Water is a special molecule too. Simply adding water to a bowl of kibble does not give the same water content absorption as when the dog receives the water as part of food.

Water within food is very valuable to the body.

If your dog has been diagnosed with kidney issues, please do speak to one of the brilliant holistic vets with raw food knowledge, many of whom offer online consults now too.

You may also find your chosen raw food brand has a vet working with them, and you can discuss things over the phone with them initially.

Why is my dog drinking less on a real food or raw food diet?

This is usually because real food contains water, meaning less is needed to be drunk. Even cooked steak is said to be around 70% water.

Real food is also less salty or highly flavoured and so doesn't make your dog as thirsty.

Ailments

Runny stools

Having diarrhoea is in most cases actually a cleansing mechanism of the body, although obviously if it continues for a few days there is the possibility of your dog becoming dehydrated, which you don't want.

If it persists it could be that your dog is having trouble digesting certain foods, perhaps they have even developed an intolerance or allergy.

Initially, when you first notice it I wouldn't panic, but would look at ways to regulate the digestive tract, using probiotics, adding garlic to perhaps kill off any bugs, and contribute prebiotics which you know from previous prebiotic paragraphs are needed too. You can also soothe the digestive tract itself using Slippery Elm, or a similar equivalent.

N.B. Always use garlic in safe doses of roughly 1 smaller clove (not bulb) per 10kg of the dog's body weight.

Constipation

On a real food diet this can commonly occur if the dog has either too much bone content or too little hydration – either lipid (fat) based hydration, or water hydration.

The essential fatty acids are needed by the large intestine to keep its cells flexible, and for it to be

able to perform what is called peristalsis, where the stool gets shunted along by the intestine. It is common to simply reduce bone content if faced with a constipated dog. I would do that but I would also increase the fatty acids level, as constipation could be a sign they are lacking lipid hydration, which could affect the rest of the body too. The increase would not be for lubrication (as the mind may offer), but because fatty acids are needed for cellular flexibility. To simply drop the bone content and not consider fatty acids could leave issues unaddressed.

It is unlikely the dog is lacking fibre in this issue, but a wonderful home remedy for constipated dogs is cooked, mashed pumpkin or butternut squash. As well as a fasting day.

Anal Gland Issues

If your dog is having enough bone content for them as an individual they should, in theory, express these glands easily and efficiently when they go to the toilet.

If your dog isn't doing this, then check the bone content first, and perhaps consider adding prebiotic foods to their diet too, such as asparagus, blueberries or chicory root powder.

It is also sometimes hard if your dog has had these expressed manually (by a vet or yourself) in the past, as they can become kind of over-expressed and take a while to get back into normal rhythm.

Skin Conditions & Allergies (microbiome)

The biology section of this book explains how the dog's intestines can become what is known in the field as 'leaky', or 'leaky gut'. This is essentially where the microvilli, not unlike the hairs on the outside of the skin, stop regenerating themselves and the lining becomes thinner. The thinner lining means food molecules or microbiome toxins can enter the bloodstream more easily, leading to an immune response of antibodies to these 'foreign' items being created. The dog is then either intolerant or fully allergic to the molecule, to varying degrees, dependent on the rest of the dog's internal health.

This explains the cycle that many dogs appear to go through whereby a new food or meat type is 'ok' for a little while, and then not. Antibodies take different amounts of time to be created.

When the gut lining is healthy again, which happens mostly due to microbiome restoration, the cycle will stop. This is the huge key to understanding canine food allergies, that all but holistic vets tend to miss.

Because every dog has a different need for microbiome it is better to encourage the dog to repopulate their own gut using prebiotics, and restore gut lining, than it is to add in a probiotic supplement of beneficial bacteria. In some cases doing both is very useful too.

Some skin conditions are also linked with the removal of toxins from the dog's body. The skin is the body's largest elimination organ. These could

be any of the contaminants found in meat these days, or things taken in from the environment. Even emotional stress can contribute to skin conditions. Supporting you dog's liver is also beneficial.

It is advisable that you begin the approach to balancing gut microbiome whatever the illness of your dog, but especially in the case of skin conditions.

You can start this using both pro- and prebiotics, and even fermented foods, like sauerkraut or goat's milk kefir. There are also lots of topical, natural skin soothers, but the internal side of things will still need attention.

If the dog's skin is not improving with a definite gut balancing protocol, seeing a holistic vet for support is advised before asking people's advice on social media (holds head in hands).

My other book 'Imperfectly Natural Canine' also has lots of tips and understandings to share on skin conditions and all ailments.

P.S. CBD is not recommended for dogs that have the kind of skin conditions or inflammation that is described as 'hot and itchy' – it's a wonderful substance, but not in those examples.

P.P.S. Check out page 15 for the biology science of how 'leaky gut' occurs!

If I really had to use kibble even for a couple of days, what kibble would you recommend?

A very common question, change is not always easy, I fully recognise this.

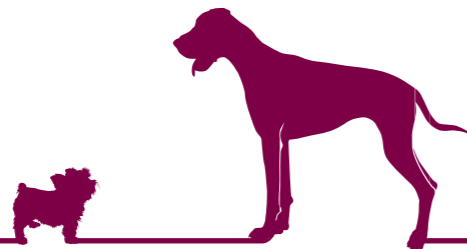
Ultimately No kibble is going to provide everything a dog needs, or the complete and balanced diet you hope in achieving. It will provide some toxins that they do not need, simply through it being processed (it is totally unavoidable no matter what a sales rep will say), so please do not feed this type of food full-time.

However in respect of kibbles that could be used for the odd day someone else cares for your dog, or perhaps during a travel period, then as long as the chosen food does not cause digestive upsets (which is likely, but does depend on the dog) then get something with a high meat content, grain-free (completely) and with a natural form of vitamins and minerals in the pre-mix.

Despite trawling through 'natural' kibble brands I have literally yet to find a brand with all those three attributes.

Some freeze-dried foods or dehydrated foods might fit the bill. These are dry, like kibbles, you feed less of them, and one brand **Rocketo** is actually really good one). You could even consider using high meat content tins/cans – as they are twice as good as than plastic tray foods (which are double cooked as opposed to the tins/cans being cooked only once).

As with many answers in this book you do really need to have a good look at all options and find the one that fits with your dog, their travel or their situation of being cared for by someone else.



Are dogs omnivores?

Within the biology of nature and wild animals (a science), the term omnivore is actually not used for a specific creature within a species. It is a term used for species as a whole. For instance, the species of Bear are omnivorous because they include Polar bears and Panda bears, who very clearly eat different diets. There is no animal that on its own is described as omnivorous, and so to use the true science terminology we cannot say that a dog is an omnivore.

Indeed when you study the digestive system of a dog it is carnivorous in nature, whereas ours (despite calling ourselves omnivores too) is actually, structurally at least, designed for plant matter. Dogs are what is known as a Facultative Carnivore.

Within the Canidae species there is one animal that, upon observation, appears to eat literally 50/50 meat and plant matter (leaves/berries/roots). This is called a Maned Wolf.

Every other Canidae species in nature is a carnivore. However, that doesn't mean they do not self-select plant matter, they just don't select very much of it. Normally it is actual plants, usually leaves or berries of the plants, rather than grains or cereals. There has been some published canine nutrition studies, as far back as 2013, highlighting that dogs have certain digestive enzymes that wolves do not.

One study in particular was cited in various articles, with headlines designed to grab the reader and challenge staunch raw feeding circles e.g. 'Dogs Can Digest Carbohydrates' or 'Dogs Evolved to Eat Cereal'.

I can absolutely believe dogs do have different enzymatic qualities to wolves, whether evolution came directly from wolves, or wolves and dog share a common ancestor, they are clearly different, albeit similar in some ways too.

So it is true that dogs have one particular enzyme that enables them to digest 'carbohydrates', or starches in particular, better than wolves. However, this does not mean they have evolved to thrive on processed food. No creature on earth has thrived, or evolved to thrive, on processed food - especially not us humans. We eat rather a lot of it, and we are equally not doing so well in the ailments stakes either.

A reminder too that carbohydrate, or starch, does not mean grain and cereal. Starches are found in plant matter, and in fact many starches are of value to the dog as prebiotics.

So in brief, to answer the question, no they are not omnivores - in fact it's a term that is largely misunderstood scientifically.

Real Life Stories

Feeding a Raw Diet is one of the most responsible caring things you can do for your dog. Switching to a raw diet can dramatically change dog's lives for the better. A raw diet can not only positively influence the health and well-being of your dog, but also positively influence his behaviour too.

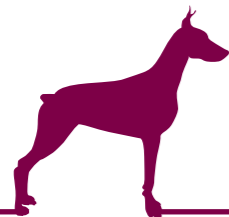
Macgyver and his owner, celebrity dog trainer Sophi Stewart

Macgyver is a glorious looking 5yr old long haired German Shepherd with lush coat, bright eyes and an incredibly calm, sought after disposition. He enjoys a dream canine life assisting his owner to train dogs, care for dogs while their owners are on holiday and join dogs on inspiring walks in some of London's finest parklands. He even enjoyed a promising career as a hospital PAT dog, cheering up poorly children and the elderly alike. Yet up until a year ago poor Macgyver's life was tainted by a rare auto immune disease that can affect large breed dogs, a condition called Symmetrical Lupoid Onchodystrophy or for short SLO. SLO is a painful condition whereby the external nails of the dog split and begin to peel backwards, until eventually the nail drops off altogether. Not only is this very

The next few pages are dedicated to some real life raw feeding stories and articles, you might even recognise a few of the faces.

painful while it happens but the resulting split nails and swollen sore paw pads are then left highly susceptible to infection. The condition is worsened in dry cold weather and by the dog walking on concrete or similar ground underfoot. The condition meant that Macgyver had to give up his work as a pat dog and long walks in his favourite parks became limited in order to keep him on the soft ground only.

SLO is well known as being very tough to treat. His owner Sophi, was informed by the veterinary dermatologist that the conventional veterinary route was to rather optimistically treat him with pharmaceutical grade vitamin and mineral supplements.



The dermatologist recommended also consulting a holistic vet. It was this Vet that proposed Sophi consider switching Macgyver's diet over to one that contained raw meat and vegetables. It made sense to Sophi as the treatments so far had centered around getting more nutrients, especially minerals into his system. A diet that promised a greater digestibility and bio availability of nutrients was worth a try. In Sophi's words 'the diet has made a massive difference to him! Since beginning his new feeding regime of pre packed raw meat, ground bone and vegetables he has only had one

occurrence of a nail split, during a particularly dry cold spell around February last year. I can't praise the new diet enough and have recommended it to almost all my clients since!

Macgyver is back to his old self and enjoying life to the maximum, we hope that in time he will be able to head back into the hospitals to share some of his love and affection again.

www.doghollow.co.uk



What I Feed my Dogs for Nutritional Benefit and Economical Value

by Bob Weatherwax

Hollywood dog trainer and owner/breeder/trainer of the Lassie film and television Collies Everything I first knew about nutrition, I learned from my father, Rudd, who learned from his father, Walter. My dad grew up on a working angora goat farm in the sparse mountainous part of New Mexico. In those days – the last years of the 19th century and first part of the 20th – farms were mainly self-sustaining. Everything and everybody had a purpose, from livestock and crops to family members. As a boy, my surroundings reminded me of the children's nursery rhyme, Old MacDonald Had a Farm. We seemed to have at least one or more of every animal you'd find in a barn or pasture. I soon understood why. Coming out of the Depression years and heading straight into World War II rationing, no matter how well my dad's career as a Hollywood dog trainer went, he always thought about economy first while maintaining the best value. His approach was most obvious in the recipe he concocted to feed the 40 to 60 dogs in the kennel. Every dog had to be in top condition, ready to appear in the background of a scene or lead the action in a scene. From our chickens, eggs – shell and all – went into the recipe. From our goats and cows, milk was added. Meat from a butchered pig or cow or goat or chicken was a major ingredient. Whatever the livestock ate vegetables, fruit, grain – often found its way into the recipe. Bones were not a part of the recipe since the whole concoction was cooked up. But times and attitudes changed. My father and I both fed canned and bagged food to our dogs while adding a modified version of the recipe now and then. Who couldn't say no to the convenience that commercial food promotes!

About ten years ago, I became aware of the new trend to feed raw. It made sense to me. Some people may think that's going backwards – back to a simpler time and back when convenience wasn't available. But in giving my dog's home-prepared food again and raw meat and bones, I noticed an incredible difference. I always considered my Hollywood working dogs to be healthy and long-lived, but on a diet of real whole fresh food, their coat texture and coat length were more correct, their eyes sparkled, their responsiveness and alertness were magnified, and their teeth gleamed. Oh, there is one other way I could tell how nutritious this diet was. It was crystal clear that what the dogs ate was really being absorbed and used healthily. The size and amount of waste material was greatly reduced. Yard pickup never went so easy or so fast.

Now that I have moved away from Hollywood and am no longer active in training dogs for the entertainment industry, my own dogs – my personal pets – continue to reap the benefits of this easy to prepare diet. For a while, I lived right at the edge of a man-made lake stocked with fish. I'd get my rod and reel, my dogs would follow me, and, as soon as I'd catch a fish, the dogs would grab their treat and devour it. Now, I shop for their meals in the same markets that I shop for my meals. For the most part, I follow a prey diet for my two young dogs, who eat raw turkey and raw chicken. The big dog loves his turkey necks and drumsticks. The little dog loves his chicken necks and wings.

All in all, my expenses for the raw meat and bones are quite reasonable and actually, pound for pound and dollar for dollar, less expensive than canned or bagged dog food. Nutritionally speaking, my dogs couldn't be healthier. I do make dietary changes for aging dogs, based on the condition of their teeth or other health needs. My last old dog needed a diet that went easy on his mouth and his stomach. For him, I prepared a stew of steamed rice, boiled chicken, and cooked vegetables.

If I've learned one thing in my lifetime, it's the truth behind the saying, "everything old is new again." These days, we talk about the benefits of sustainable farms and local farmers markets – the same values that my dad and grandfather stood by and practiced. These days, we try to stretch our money as far as it will go – just as my dad and grandfather did in the lean times of their lives. And these days, we recognize all over again just how important the human/animal bond is – the very thing that has given my family professional pride and a respected legacy. As for me, I can tell you that I was never happier than when I was in my father's kennel, caring for and playing with the puppies.... then I was just a young pup myself. Nothing has really changed. Now my best moments are the ones I share with my dogs, which includes giving them the best diet possible.

www.weatherwaxtraineddogs.com



Resources

Real/Raw Food Brands – these are UK wide brands.

You may find more economical brands serving your local area only.

www.honeysrealdogfood.com – Well-loved UK brand that deliver & include Fully Organic complete meals in their range.

www.naturesmenu.com – The brand you will see in multi-chain pet store freezers, most useful for beginners as the complete food is in easy ice-cube size squares you can count out and defrost in your dog's bowl. Probably the most commercial of all brands.

www.ndfd.co.uk – Ask for this in your pet stores. Ready-made complete meal with bonus of supergreens, berries and squashes. They also create raw cat food too.

www.benyfitnatural.co.uk – UK delivery, offer ready-made completes and bones.

www.purrform.co.uk – Real/Raw complete food for cats too! Cats are Obligate carnivores and actually need raw meat and no grain even more than our nations dogs do.

Supplements and natural dog goodies

Vacprotecta – order through thier Facebook page. – a before-vaccine homeopathic preparation to support your dog's body to cope with the vaccine, to avoid vaccinosis. Created for each dog individually tailored to the specific vaccine they need to have. There is currently no other product like it.

www.smartbarf.co.uk – made of herbs, vegetables, fruits and seeds – simply add to raw minces for a more complete nutritious meal.

www.aniforte.co.uk – including seaweed, herbs and plants sprouts – another 'add to raw minces and create a meal' supplement.

www.proflax.co.uk – Herbal holistic food supplement with flaxseed oil.

Natural / Holistic Vets

www.ahvma.org – American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, Central website

There is no central website for Holistic vets in the UK, you need to look under the various holistic therapies. An Acupuncture trained vet maybe pro real food feeding, and near to you. You may be surprised who you find. Many Holistic vets also offer online consultations

www.abva.co.uk – Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists

www.bahvs.com – British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons

www.herbalvets.org.uk – UK Association for Veterinary Herbalists

www.rfvs.info – A directory of Vets who support and understand raw feeding pets.

www.vincethevet.co.uk – Online consultations, a range of supplements and even a raw food range.

Miscellaneous

www.canine-health-concern.org.uk – Charity researching the science behind natural and alternative care for dogs.

www.feline-nutrition.org – your one stop shop for feeding cats a real food diet , cats are obligate carnivores, they need real, preferably raw meat!

www.thespiritualdogtrainer.com – Spiritual Retreat Holidays for dogs and their human friends.

www.canineflow.com – Heart-Centred Dog Training and Behaviour support

I'm Caroline (& this is Foosa with me)

Author | Speaker | Shelter dog owner |
Qualified nutritional therapist | Pet food industry specialist.

I've been working in the pet industry & feeding real, fresh food to pets for over 25 years. My aim is to make the vast choice of pet products, pet foods and varied opinions easy to understand and navigate through.

I run holistic retreat holidays for dogs and their human friends, now in our 12th year, and would be really excited to welcome you to one of them.

I run a few clinics in across the UK, I am also more than happy to refer you to another trusted canine nutrition practitioner closer to you as after 25 years I have a good idea of who's who in the natural dog care industry. If you liked this book you may also enjoy my natural dog care book Imperfectly Natural Canine, part of BBC Janey Lee Grace's Imperfectly Natural series.

Simply type my name into search engines and this will come up.



Notes

Notes

The Best Dog Diet Ever by Caroline Griffith



This is the book your dog, has been waiting for you to read!

An absolute must for any dog owner wanting to provide the best for their dog.

An easy to read, fun, informative guide to the science and the reasoning behind why feeding raw meat, bones and a small amount of vegetables is the best diet your dog could ever be fed.

You will discover how to feed the diet, why to feed the diet and find answers to all your questions, even the controversial ones - included in this logical, enjoyable book.

- *Discover how to feed a raw diet on a budget and fit the diet into your dogs lifestyle*
- *Find out how diet could be influencing your dogs behaviour*
- *Discover the true nutrients and elements your dogs needs for happiness and well-being*
- *Learn the anatomy of your dogs digestive system, and how different it is to a humans!*
- *Learn ways the raw diet can boost immunity and improve a dogs ability to heal*
- *Understand what makes up a raw diet for dogs and how to feed it effectively*

Also includes raw feeding insights from Celebrity dog trainer Sophi Stewart, Owner and Trainer of the Lassie movie dogs Bob Weatherwax.

Caroline Griffith is a nutritional therapist who has been working in the pet care industry and feeding raw meaty diets to dogs for 25 years. She is committed to achieving a greater understanding and acceptance of the philosophies and the science behind natural and holistic dog care. Her goal in life is to improve the happiness, well-being and confidence of as many dogs as possible, worldwide.

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