

How To Introduce Your Dog To Raw Food

by Kimberly Thomson

Natural and Organic Living — naturallysavvy

Many people may be interested in feeding their dogs a raw diet, but most of those people are probably unsure how to make the switch from commercial kibble or canned. The good news is: switching to raw foods is quite easy.

Any dog (old and young, healthy and not so healthy) can benefit from a raw diet, and many owners of animals with various diseases or afflictions have reported incredible improvement and/or a complete cure after they switched their pet to a raw diet.

Feeding Recommendations:

Dogs should only be fed between the hours of noon and midnight because they digest between these hours using 80 percent of their daily energy. Additional food should not be given outside this period as it can slow down the digestive process.

Adult dogs do not need to be fed more than once daily in the evening around dinner. Dogs sleep during the day and hunt and eat in the evening.

Puppies need to be fed at least twice a day, starting at noon.

Puppies and adults need to fast once a week. Puppies up to one year old should only fast a half day a week. Fasting gives the 80 percent energy back to heal and restore the body. (This is extremely important for your dog, almost as much as feeding a raw diet!)

Your dog is highly unlikely to contract salmonella or e-coli from raw meat. The acids in their saliva and digestive tracts are many times higher than our own. This high level of acid kills these bacteria. They also have very short digestive tracts allowing for quicker elimination of meat. Consequently, meat does not sit in the digestive tract long enough to collect bacteria.

Do not mix raw food with commercial kibble or canned foods which are cooked and are not bio-available to the dog. Dogs simply do not have the enzymes to properly digest cooked foods.

Switching Your Dog to a Raw Diet:

Fast your dog for one day (one-half day for puppies) prior to feeding them raw food.

If the dog was previously healthy, split the raw meal into two parts, feeding the first around noon and the other around dinner time.

Although unlikely, watch for diarrhea or vomiting. If there is diarrhea, feed smaller amounts over the days to follow. If there is vomiting, your dog may need extra enzymes.

Your dog may act hungry even after eating. Dogs will gorge on the right foods. However, even when full, once they get a taste ↗

(*How To Introduce Your Dog To Raw Food* cont.)

of real meat, they want more! Instead of automatically giving in, use your dog's weight as a guide to the proper amount to feed him. Slightly lean is better than overweight.

Make sure your dog has filtered water at all times.

Changes in Your Dog's Health:

Dogs fed on a raw diet drink less due to the water content in the food. Dogs will also defecate much less as well; those in the habit of defecating multiple times a day will likely change to once a day on a raw diet.

Man's best friend will also shed less, have fewer eye and ear infections and their breath (though still doggy) will improve. Any tear stains will slowly disappear and if your dog is fed a raw diet from puppyhood, the tears will not stain at all. Teeth will be virtually tartar-free and any tartar that has accumulated on the teeth often disappears.

A raw diet is highly recommended and is the most bio-appropriate food to feed your dog.

For more on the benefits of a raw diet for your dog, consult *Healing Pets with Nature's Cures* by Henry Pasternak, DVM, CVA and *The Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog* by Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM. ☐

Kennel Cough in Dogs – Contagious and Serious

Kennel cough is a very highly contagious respiratory disease among dogs. As the name of the disease suggests, it is usually brought on by dogs that have been boarded. Kennel Cough is usually accompanied by a bad cough and severe bronchial attacks. The disease is found throughout the world and is known to infect a very high percentage of dogs at least once during their lifetime.

Young puppies can suffer the most severe complications that can result from this disease, since they have an underdeveloped immune system that is still strengthening. Also at increased risk are older dogs, which have decreased immune capabilities due to their older age.

Symptoms of Kennel Cough:

1. Dry hacking cough is the most common symptom which may sound like honking; ↓

(*Kennel Cough In Dogs* cont.)

2. Retching;
3. Watery nasal discharge;
4. In mild cases, dogs would likely be active and eating normally;
5. In severe cases, symptoms progress and can include pneumonia, lack of appetite, fever, lethargy and even death;

If your dog has any of the above symptoms, make sure to see your veterinarian immediately.

The causes of Kennel Cough:

Most of the time kennel cough is caused by your dog being at a boarding facility that has placed the dog in contact with a number of other dogs. One of more of many disease or illnesses can be contracted if a sick dog is not boarded separately once one dog has Kennel Cough. It is nothing against boarding facilities, it is just the proximity to so many dogs.

The diagnosis of Kennel Cough:

The diagnosis of Kennel Cough is based upon the type of symptoms and your dog's history with regards to exposure to other dogs. You will need to give a thorough history of your dog's health to your veterinarian and when the cough started. A complete blood profile will be conducted, including a chemical blood profile, a complete blood count and a urinalysis. These blood tests, along with viral isolation and bacterial cultures, will be performed in order to verify individual agents that are causing the kennel cough.

Treatment for Kennel Cough:

Depending on the severity of the infection and the severity of the symptoms, there are two main types of treatments that can be given for Kennel cough. In the most common and uncomplicated type of disease, there is generally no need for antibiotics.

If your dog is alert, but has only minor symptoms along with the recurrent cough, then it is often left alone to go through the course of the disease, just like the colds in humans. Most of the time an anti-inflammatory will be given to your dog in order to reduce the severity and frequency of coughing episodes and to make your dog more comfortable. Antibiotics will be used if your dog is not eating, is running a fever, and is showing signs of severe respiratory troubles, as this may indicate pneumonia.

While your dog is recovering from Kennel Cough, allow him to breathe without anything that might irritate or constrict his throat, such as collars or restricting leashes. For walks and going outdoors, you can substitute the collar with a body harness.

How to prevent kennel cough:

In order to prevent this disease, it is recommended that you not expose your dog to kennel like or boarding conditions, where large populations of dogs are contained and mixed together. However, if you cannot avoid this, then a proper vaccination would be the best option. Talk to your veterinarian about what is available for your dog, since there are certain vaccines that can have worrisome side effects. Therefore, vaccines to prevent Kennel Cough are generally only given to dogs that are at high risk.

Even with precautions, a large number of dogs acquire this respiratory infection. It is best to be observant and prepared.

Kennel Cough isn't usually contagious for humans; however, there are instances where young kids and adults with a weak immune system are at risk for infection. In these cases, care must be taken to protect those at risk from coming into contact with the sick dog until it has fully recovered. If contact cannot be avoided, make sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and/or use gloves when dealing with your sick dog. □

Does Your Dog Have Bad Breath?

We love getting those wet, mushy kisses from our dogs all over our faces. And while they are the best way that our dogs express their love, it can become a bit unbearable if they have bad doggy breath! Dog halitosis is very common among dogs. Bad doggy breath can sometimes be a sign of a more serious illness, but usually a little extra dental care and change in diet can help make your dog's breath minty clean (or at least back to normal).

The Cause of Bad Breath:

Bad breath is caused by an increase of the bacteria that produces odors in your dog's mouth and stomach. There are many factors that can cause this increase and bad breath in canines. The main factor tends to be poor dental health. Tartar buildup, plaque, and gum disease will all enhance bad breath in dogs.

A poor diet can also be a factor in your dog's bad breath, especially if you feed your pup canned or table food. If your dog has a habit of eating trash, other pets' food, and anything that he or she can find, it can also contribute to its breath issues.

In more serious cases, bad breath can indicate larger medical issues, like diabetes or kidney disease. If you see symptoms of other diseases or if bad breath persists after adjusting diet and oral health regimens, make sure to take your dog to your veterinarian.

Treating Bad Breath:

If your veterinarian has ruled out any sort of medical issue, then below are some ways to help curb your dog's bad breath:

1. Your dog's breath can be minimized by starting a cleaning routine:

Fighting plaque and tartar buildup is the first step in keeping your dogs' teeth healthy and clean, and in turn, will reduce bad breath. Dogs' teeth should be brushed at least twice a week. Use toothpaste formulated for dogs and whichever doggie toothbrush works best for you and your pup. While you clean your dog's teeth, check for foreign objects that could be lodged in your dog's teeth or gums.

Many vets also recommend that dogs have their teeth professionally cleaned once every year. Veterinarians will thoroughly clean your dog's teeth, take x-rays, check for cavities and remove diseased teeth. Talk to your vet about dental checkups and cleanings.

2. Your dog's diet can be contributing to the bad breath:

Your dog's diet can influence his oral health and can also contribute to stinking up their breath. Make sure to feed your dog high quality food that is easy to digest. Canned food and table food can be factors in bad breath, so unless your veterinarian directs you to use canned food, stick solely to the dried variety. If possible, don't moisten dried kibble as the added crunch will help fight tartar. Also make sure your dog isn't eating cat or other pet food, trash and make sure that these items are not within your dog's reach. ↓

("Does Your Dog Have Bad Breath?" cont.)

3. Try adding parsley slowly to your dog's diet:

As in humans, Parsley is a natural breath freshener that is safe for dogs to ingest unless their stomachs are sensitive to it. Experiment with this fresh herb by adding it to your dog's food. Do so slowly and see how your dog takes to it. Raw carrots, in moderation are also known to help minimize the bad breath.

4. Purchase some dogs chews that help make the breath and teeth clean:

Some dog chews and treats are available on the market that help clean your dog's teeth and keep breath fresh. Hard, dried dog treats work like kibble to reduce plaque with chewing. Just make sure these biscuits aren't healthy and not packed with sugar which will only add to tooth issues and require more cleaning. Other chews have anti-microbial and other ingredients that promote tooth health and fresh breath.

5. Buy some chew toys for your dogs:

Chewing is instinctual to dogs and is their natural way of cleaning teeth. There are a variety of chew toys designed specifically to help keep your dog's teeth clean. Chewing materials that are great for dog dental care include rawhide, durable rubber, some tough plastics and strong bones that are safe for dogs. Make sure to stock your pet up with a few toys that are appropriate for their size and let them start gnawing away to healthier teeth.

If your dog is not sick, the above program of brushing your dog's teeth, finding a health dog food and adding a little parsley to your dog's diet should help you get rid of your dog's bad breath. □

("Should You Buy Pet Insurance?" continued from page 4)

be caused by this. This would also apply to other dogs at the dog park.

Savings Account for Your Cats and Dogs Instead of Pet Insurance:

If you decide to opt out of getting pet insurance for your cat or dog, you might think about putting aside \$20 a month into a special savings account for your pets. Think of it as a college fund for your kids, but a lot less expensive. That way, if something occurs, you already have some money set aside for your cat or dog's vet bills.

How Can You Find The Best Pet Insurance Plan For Your Dog or Cat?

As always, the best place to find a good plan is through your friends that have dogs or cats or even better, your veterinarian. Your vet will let you know what kind of insurance they take so that at least you have a place to start and know what they will cover. Trupanion Pet Insurance has a very solid reputation and will guide you through their different plans for your specific pets' needs.

Only you can decide if dog or cat insurance is the right fit for you. Think of it as similar to health insurance (or even auto insurance) for people. You might not use it for a few years, but when something happens or you get sick, you are very happy you have it. □

Surprise! Your Dog IS Welcome in Unexpected Places!

It's common knowledge that pets are welcome at dog parks, most people parks, and most pet stores. Beyond that, however, the world can sometimes seem a little unfriendly to pet parents who would like to bring their furry best friends along everywhere possible. What many pet parents don't realize is that their pets are welcome in more places than they might think.

We've come up with a list of surprising places that have been known to welcome pets. Keep in mind that every company and venue has different rules and regulations, so it's important to call ahead to ascertain that you can bring your pet before you show up to any specific place. It's also important to remember that no matter where you go with your pet, he must be happy, friendly, leashed and under your control at all times.

Drive-In Movies:

Watching a favorite movie on the couch with your furry best friend is a great way to spend an evening at home. But if you're looking to get out and have some fun, why not take your pet with you to enjoy an outdoor retro movie experience? Many drive-ins allow you to pull up with your pooch. You can enjoy some popcorn while he snacks on dog treats from home. You'll love the movie, and he'll love hanging out with you and taking in the sights and sounds of a new place.

Department Stores:

Believe it or not, a number of department stores do allow people to bring their pets along on their shopping trips. Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom, the Gap, Old Navy and Banana Republic have all been known to welcome pets through their doors. Both Lowe's and Home Depot are well-known for their pet friendly atmosphere, and pet parents have enjoyed taking their pets along on trips to smaller stores like Michael's, Marshalls and Bed Bath and Beyond.

Banks:

Taking a quick run to the bank? You don't necessarily have to leave your pet behind. There are a number of banks that allow pets to come in with you during your visit...and we don't just mean the drive-thru window either. We mean inside the bank. Notably TD Bank actively promotes their dog friendly branches—in fact, you'll find signs in their windows that say "Paws Here. Bring your dog in for a treat."

Day Spa/Hair Salon:

If you could use some pampering yourself, you may be surprised to find that your pet can relax along with you at your favorite spa or salon. Many spas and salons will allow your (well-behaved) pet to keep you company during your visit—it's just a matter of asking.

Baseball Games:

Baseball games are an American summertime staple and a fun way to spend an afternoon. They're even more fun when your pet tags along. Many stadiums allow dogs, and most dogs find the smells, sights and sounds of an old-fashioned baseball game truly irresistible.

Restaurants:

While pets aren't allowed inside restaurants for health code reasons, hundreds of restaurants across the country allow them in their outdoor dining areas. Some restaurants even go the extra mile and offer doggie menus or special doggie treats. TripsWithPets.com can help you find great pet friendly restaurants in your area. You may be surprised to find you can take Fido to one of your favorite eateries or you may find a new



("Your Dog IS Welcome in Unexpected Places!" cont.)

favorite spot you both love.

Flea Markets/Outdoor Fairs and Festivals:

Flea markets, fairs and festivals are fantastic places to take your pet, as there are so many interesting things to see and do for both of you. You'll enjoy the festivities and your pet will love people watching, meeting and greeting with kids and grown-up pet lovers, socializing with other pets and taking in all of the delicious smells in the air. Most outdoor flea markets and fairs allow pets and some indoor ones are pet friendly as well. Just make sure your pet is well-socialized and can handle being around loud noises and large crowds.

Car Dealerships:

Bringing your car to the dealer to be serviced can be a pretty dull endeavor. Bringing your pet along with you is a great way to stay entertained and enjoy some quality time together. Many dealerships will welcome both you and Fido—just call ahead to be sure.

This list isn't exhaustive. There are many other places that may very well allow you to bring your pet. Keep an eye out for people on the go along with their furry friends, and inquire about pet friendly policies at any place you think might make a fun outing for you both. It never hurts to ask, and you might discover some new favorite spots around town.

TripsWithPets.com is the #1 online resource for pet travel. Named best pet travel site by Consumer Reports, TripsWithPets.com's mission is to offer resources that ensure pets are welcome, happy and safe while traveling. Kim Salerno is the president and founder of TripsWithPets.com. She founded the pet travel site in 2003 and is an expert in the field of pet travel. Her popular website features pet friendly hotels and accommodations across the USA and Canada, along with other helpful pet travel resources. Her mission is to ensure that pets are welcome, happy, and safe in their travels. □

Should You Buy Pet Insurance For Your Dogs or Cats?

I know that a lot of dog and cat owners are ambivalent about whether they should purchase pet insurance for their pet(s). Pet insurance is preventative insurance for any type of pet illness or any incident that might occur in which you need to take your dog or cat to the vet or hospital. There are many plans out there that won't break the bank and give you peace of mind if any sort of illness or accident happens with your cat or dog.

Pet Insurance For Cats:

Even indoor kitties might need cat insurance. Your cats might dart out an open door or eat something they shouldn't, like houseplants or dental floss. They can also suffer from illnesses as common as stomach upset to more serious problems like kidney disease. More advanced veterinary treatments are available today for cats, which is great news. However, it can be expensive to give your felines the best care possible.

A cat health insurance plan can make it a lot easier. You can find a good, well-rounded pet insurance plan for your cat for \$10 to \$20 a month. It's a good way to save for the unknown illnesses or other unforeseen incidents that might occur in your cat's life.

Pet Insurance For Your Dog or Puppy:

When you first get a dog or puppy, you will probably be told by people that you need to buy pet insurance. However you may not be at all ➔

("Should You Buy Pet Insurance For Your Dogs or Cats?" cont.)

clear as to exactly why you need it, especially if you haven't owned a dog before and probably didn't even know that pet insurance existed. The cost varies with the type of dog and age, and similar to car insurance, you should price them out and determine what is applicable to your dogs needs.

Pet Insurance Can Cover Your Dog's Vet Bills:

If there is one reason for having pet insurance that you had already thought of, it is probably health insurance. That is, insurance to cover your vet's bills if your dog is sick or injured in an accident. It's most unlikely that your dog will go through his whole life without a single disease or injury and usually just one treatment can cost a lot of money. Dog insurance policies vary enormously as to what levels of coverage they provide so you need to compare them carefully and see what best meets your needs.

Whether it's a scrape at the dog park or a common bite wound, accidents can happen quickly. And dogs often explore items with their mouths, so swallowed objects and harmful substances are common dog accidents. Did you hear about the Great Dane that swallowed 43 pairs of socks? Also, just like us, dogs can get sick with all kinds of illnesses from ear infections to cancer.

Does Your Dog Have Any Pre-disposed Illness or Conditions?

You should also consider the breed of the dog or puppy that you own. For example, Labradors tend to have problems with their legs and in many cases, need surgery later in life. Talk to other pet owners or breeders to see if they have any thoughts or ideas whether it is mindful to purchase insurance for your particular breed. Of course, if you have rescued a dog, you might not know the exact breed. But, even then, given the questionable genetics of your pooch, it's better to have a plan in place.

Pet Insurance is Important For Unforeseen Catastrophic Events:

There are some other reasons to purchase pet insurance. For instance, if your dog runs out on the road and causes a car accident, you will need insurance to cover you for legal advice and compensation payment. You are responsible for what your dog does, so the other party will sue you. If a serious injury is involved, the compensation could be huge.

If your dog bites someone, such as a friend or even a neighbor, pet insurance can help prevent the medical bills that can be caused by this. This would also apply to other dogs at the dog park.

Savings Account for Your Cats and Dogs Instead of Pet Insurance:

If you decide to opt out of getting pet insurance for your cat or dog, you might think about putting aside \$20 a month into a special savings account for your pets. Think of it as a college fund for your kids, but a lot less expensive. That way, if something occurs, you already have some money set aside for your cat or dog's vet bills.

How Can You Find The Best Pet Insurance Plan For Your Dog or Cat?

As always, the best place to find a good plan is through your friends that have dogs or cats or even better, your vet-

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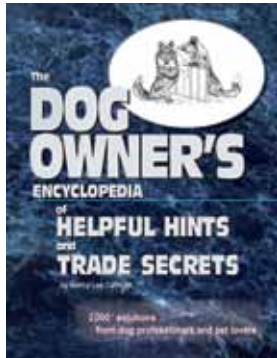
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