



HOW TO FEED YOUR DOG FROZEN RAW FOOD

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WHY FEED YOUR DOG A RAW FROZEN DIET?

Here are the two most compelling reasons to feed your dog a raw frozen diet:

- 1. Close to nature.** Short of feeding your dog freshly killed prey, a raw frozen diet comes closer to the diet of your dog's wild ancestors than anything else available.
- 2. Health benefits.** Evidence that raw diets contribute to canine health is still mostly anecdotal, but the anecdotal evidence is compelling. Most dog owners are surprised by the positive changes they see in their animals within weeks of beginning to feed raw foods: healthier, shinier coats; smaller, less smelly stools; greater energy; better appetites; and a more engaging personality. Equally surprising are the positive changes some owners have seen in animals suffering from veterinary and non-veterinary conditions including obesity, dental health, urinary tract infections, vomiting, diarrhea, diabetes, allergies, and food intolerances.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN

In recent years, many veterinarians, including Mud Bay's consulting veterinarian, have embraced raw foods as an essential part of a holistic approach to long-term canine health. Still, other veterinarians remain opposed to raw diets for dogs. Opponents often cite the lack of scientific evidence in favor of raw diets and the risks associated with raw meat and chewing bones. Supporters usually counter that the risks are small and are outweighed by the long-term potential health benefits. Every diet—raw, kibble, canned or home-made—carries with it potential advantages and disadvantages. Before putting your dog on any diet—raw or otherwise—we suggest discussing its appropriateness for your dog with your veterinarian. This is particularly important if your dog currently has any veterinary conditions. If at any time your dog refuses to eat for more than 48 hours, develops symptoms or otherwise seems unwell, contact your veterinarian. If a dietary transition leads to vomiting that continues for 24 hours after you stop feeding or begins again after you reintroduce food, contact your veterinarian.

HOW TO CHOOSE AMONG RAW FROZEN DIETS

There are four steps to choosing the raw frozen diet that is most likely to fit your and your dog's needs

- 1. Choose between rotational and non-rotational feeding.** There are two ways to feed frozen raw diets:
 - Non-rotational feeding.** Non-rotational feeding means feeding your dog the same food every day. This is the simple approach to raw. If you are new to raw food or just want to keep things simple, choose non-rotational feeding.
 - Rotational feeding.** Rotational feeding means feeding your dog different foods on different days. This approach is closer to a dog's ancestral diet, and its advantages can include exercise, entertainment, greater variety, and lower cost. The disadvantages of rotational feeding include the need to use a feeding schedule, the need for more freezer space, the need to supervise dogs while they chew raw animal parts, and the need to disinfect afterwards.
- 2. Choose between HPP and non-HPP.** High pressure pasteurization (HPP) uses pressure to kill pathogenic bacteria. Everyone agrees that pathogen-free food is good, but authorities differ on the extent to which HPP potentially leaves proteins, enzymes, and other nutrients less bioavailable (digestible and usable). HPP foods are probably safer (especially for households that include elderly folks, small children or immune-compromised individuals.) Non-HPP foods are closer to nature.
- 3. Choose the form that works best for you.** Raw frozen diets come in four forms. Here is how to choose:
 - Nuggets/Medallions/Chunks.** Nuggets tend to be more expensive to feed but are easy to measure and quick to defrost. A great fit for small dogs.
 - Patties.** Patties are easy to handle and generally a better value than nuggets—a great fit for medium and large dogs.
 - Parts.** Parts include raw meaty bones, chicken necks, and other minimally processed animal parts. They are used as elements in a rotational diet and as natural, nutrient-rich treats or dietary supplements.

4. Choose the meat protein that works best for your dog. Of the meats used in frozen dog food, chicken has the most complete amino acid profile. If your dog has an allergy or intolerance to chicken or a history of doing better on a different meat, use what you know about your dog to guide your choice. Otherwise, start with chicken.

SUPPLEMENT RAW FROZEN FOR PART OF YOUR DOG'S KIBBLE OR TRANSITION TO 100% RAW

Most raw foods experts believe the greatest benefits for most dogs come from a diet that is 100% raw. If you want to transition your dog to a diet that is more than half raw, see: [How to Transition Dogs to Raw Foods](#).

Most dog owners who feed raw—especially owners of medium and large dogs—combine 25% to 50% raw with a corresponding amount of kibble because this approach is less expensive and more flexible than feeding all raw. To transition your dog to this kind of raw diet, simply reduce the amount of kibble you feed your dog by 25% to 50% and simultaneously begin feeding them 25% to 50% of the amount of raw food that is recommended for a dog their size (apply the same percentage in both cases).

Most dogs can adjust quickly to a small substitution of raw for kibble, but owners transitioning their dogs to 40% to 50% kibble should start with a 25% substitution and then increase to a 40% to 50% substitution after a week. You can increase your dog's chances of a seamless transition to raw by starting a prebiotic and digestive enzyme supplement (InClover Optagest or Herbsmith Microflora Plus are an excellent choices) a few days before transitioning to raw and continuing for a few months. After you have been feeding raw for a few weeks, adjust the amount of kibble or raw slightly up or down if you or your veterinarian believes your dog needs to gain or lose weight.

Substituting raw for part of a dog's kibble is unlikely to lead to health concerns, but if your dog refuses to eat or develops vomiting, diarrhea, excess gas, or constipation, you may be transitioning them too quickly. If this happens, stop the transition, and withhold food for 24 hours. Then begin feeding frequent, small meals of their original diet. If all symptoms cease and they appear back to normal, re-start the transition a few days later, but with a more gradual approach—see: [How to Transition Dogs to Raw Foods](#) for detailed guidance. If the transition leads to vomiting that continues for 24 hours, contact your veterinarian.

SAFE HANDLING OF RAW FROZEN DOG FOOD

Minimizing the risks associated with feeding raw frozen dog food is not hard, but it is important. We strongly recommend you follow the guidelines described in [Seven Steps in Safely Handling Raw Pet Food](#).

RESULTS

You should begin seeing improvements in your dog's skin, coat, energy level and stool within a few weeks. Greater benefits are likely to become apparent over the following two or three months.

Still have questions? Talk to a Muddy in any of our stores or chat with an expert online at mudbay.com.

Mud Bay and its staff strive to help dog and cat owners improve the health of their animals and to increase the happiness owners experience in caring for their animals by providing natural foods, well-made supplies and useful information. Mud Bay and its staff do not diagnose or treat specific conditions and the information provided by Mud Bay's staff, publications, website and other media are not substitutes for treatment by a veterinarian.