

# GOING RAW



## GETTING STARTED

The ease with which your pet **transitions to raw foods** will vary based on many factors. Most young, healthy pets will transition seamlessly, while older animals, finicky eaters and those with underlying health conditions may require some increased care and support. The following guidelines will assist you in safely and successfully changing your pet's diet to **nourishing raw foods**:

Our number one rule of thumb is **go slow**. Plan on changing your pet's diet over a week (or more) to allow their digestive system time to adjust. Start by slightly reducing the amount of their regular food and adding a **small amount of raw** (teaspoon to heaping tablespoon depending on the size of your pet). Do this for a couple of days to help your pet get used to the flavor and texture of their new food. If your pet accepts it and there are no digestive upsets start to feed raw meals in the morning and their regular food in the evening. It is important to separate these meals, as the transit time for raw meat through the digestive tract is quite different than dry kibble. Many pets will transition quickly and consume the raw food eagerly. **Monitor bowel movements** to help determine how well their system is adjusting. Stools should become small and firm. If they are loose, profuse or foul smelling, or any vomiting occurs, the raw food should be introduced more slowly. When your pet is consuming the raw food readily and is having regular healthy bowel movements, you can begin feeding raw foods for both meals.

## HELPFUL TIPS

- Have a **dedicated 'raw' container** to thaw food in. Glass containers with lids work well as they are dishwasher safe and easily cleaned. Take out only as much as your pet will eat in a 24 hour period. Remove packaging and thaw in the fridge.
- Most pets will benefit from the addition of **probiotics and digestive enzymes** during the transition. Starting probiotics the week before introducing a new food can make a huge difference in how your pet adjusts. Unpasteurized natural yogurt and kefir are good probiotic options for animals not sensitive to dairy. Raw green tripe is an excellent source of naturally occurring enzymes and contains a number of beneficial bacteria. These may all be fed on their own or with regular meals. There are many options available from pet retailers, health stores and veterinary clinics. Speak with someone knowledgeable on the subject to determine, which is right for your pet. Animals with digestive issues can really benefit from these supplements over the long term.
- A short **bone broth "fast"** (24-36 hours of offering just fresh water and bone broth) can help prepare your pet's digestive tract for a diet change, while stimulating their hunger. Bone broth is a nutrient dense superfood containing compounds which help

nourish and heal inflamed joints, skin and damaged guts. Beyond that, it supports the liver, which is really important as many pets switching to a natural diet can undergo a detoxification (see FAQs). Avoid "fasting" cats (especially if they are overweight) and young animals (under 1 year).

- Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs)** are an integral part of every cell in the living body. Many experts now agree that deficiencies, imbalances and presence of rancid fats in pet foods are contributing to a wide range of health problems. If your pet is itchy, has dry, flaky or greasy skin, and/or suffers from allergies, arthritis or any other chronic inflammatory condition they will likely benefit from the addition of EFAs to their diet. Since EFAs are fragile and degrade quickly it is best to add them fresh at time of feeding. Please note that "more" is not necessarily better with fatty acids. Small amounts can create great health benefits, while large amounts and imbalances created by adding the wrong fats can be detrimental over the long term.

- Remember, nothing is written in stone. **Each pet is an individual**. If you have any questions or concerns along the way, please seek assistance from a trusted Holistic Animal Health Care provider experienced in raw feeding.

# JUST THE FAQs

bcsbestrawpetfood.com



## ARE BCS BEST MEALS “COMPLETE” AND “BALANCED”?

BCs Best meals contain a variety of nourishing whole foods which are finely ground to allow for optimal nutrient digestion and absorption. “Balance” is achieved by feeding a variety of whole foods which change throughout the year with the seasons. At BCs Best, we understand that all animals are individuals, whose nutrient needs will differ throughout their lifetimes. Understanding that whole foods act in synergy with the body to provide both known and “yet-to-be-discovered” nutrients in bioavailable, health promoting forms, we are working to dispel the myth that one food, balanced with synthetic nutrients, can (or should) provide for the nutritional needs of all pets throughout their lifetime. Alternating proteins and “bone-in” (chicken/duck) formulations with those not containing bones (beef/lamb) is an important to create “complete” nutrition. Some supplementation may be beneficial (Eg. Omega fatty acids, Probiotics, Kelp) depending on the health status and individual needs of the pet.

## WHY ISN'T MY PET INTERESTED IN THE NEW FOOD?

Finicky eaters, old and/or sick animals may show some adversity to raw foods, especially when served cold directly from the fridge. Gently warming the raw food often makes it more appealing. One way of doing this is to place the food in a sealed, water tight bag and place in a container of warm water. Another option is to mix the food with some of warm healing bone broth. Some pets are literally addicted to processed foods and have habituated to eating the same thing every day for years. Mixing a small amount of the old food in with the new can help them get used to their new diet. Go slow, monitor stools, and consider the helpful tips from above.

## CAN I FEED RAW PART-TIME?

Yes, adding a raw-day, as often as possible can confer many health benefits to your pet. Many factors will impact how feasible it is to feed raw. As long as it does not upset your pet's digestive system, we encourage incorporating real whole foods into their diet in whatever way fits your lifestyle and budget. Always monitor your pet's digestive health and avoid feeding raw at the same time as kibble.

## YOUR DOG LAMB FORMULATION CONTAINS GARLIC. ISN'T THIS TOXIC?

There are multiple benefits to feeding your dog garlic. Along with being a natural antimicrobial, antifungal and anti-inflammatory, it is also a powerful digestive aid, immune stimulant and parasite deterrent. Too much of anything is bad for your pet. Vitamins A and D, for example, are essential to health at a certain level, but have well known toxic effects when fed in excess. Garlic, due to its widely acknowledged health benefits is included at a level known to be safe for dogs.

## WILL MY PET GO THROUGH A DETOX WHEN SWITCHING TO RAW?

Providing optimum nutrition supports our pet's bodies in healing while allowing for the elimination of unwanted and dangerous substances (toxins) from the body. Whether or not your pet goes through a detoxification will depend on many factors. Age, health status, genetics, previous diet and exposure

to environmental pollutants will all play a role. It is important to realize this “cleansing” period is a natural process. Symptoms may include low energy, dark, smelly urine, dandruff, hair loss, skin eruptions, ear discharge/ inflammation and/or digestive upset. Vomiting may occur and stools may become loose and contain mucous. Worms may be eliminated. The length of detox will vary between animals, but rest assured, the symptoms are temporary and are signs of the body healing itself. Excessive vomiting and diarrhea is NOT a normal cleansing reaction. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with a holistic minded veterinarian who can help support your pet through the process.

## YOUR BEEF AND LAMB MEALS DO NOT CONTAIN GROUND BONE. HOW DO I ENSURE MY PET GETS ENOUGH CALCIUM?

By regularly rotating BCs Best Beef and Lamb meals with BCs Best poultry meals containing ground bone, your animal's calcium requirements will be met for all lifestages. If you are unable to feed approximately equal amounts of the different proteins each month then we recommended you add a calcium supplement to the beef and lamb meals. Puppies and pregnant/lactating females require the addition of 1 teaspoon (per pound of food) of human grade bone meal (contains both calcium and phosphorus). Alternatively, ground eggshell powder prepared from cleaned, dried powdered eggshells can be added to adult dog meals at 1 teaspoon per pound of food. Raw meaty bones are another way to ensure calcium/phosphorus requirements are met. Please speak with an experienced raw feeder, before offering raw bones as food for your pet.

## IS RAW MEAT SAFE FOR MY PET?

BCs Best pasture-raised / organic and/or free-ranged meats come from provincially regulated BC abattoirs where robust food safety practices are used in preparing and handling food intended for human consumption. Our products are deep frozen for a minimum of 10 days to kill any potential parasites, which normally would be destroyed through cooking. It is important to remember that cats and dogs were “designed” to eat raw meat. Cats tend to be quite choosy, preferring ‘fresh prey’ over that which has been buried and saved for another day. However, most of us familiar with dogs, know that given the opportunity, many will eagerly consume not only long buried bones, but also cow patties and the terribly revolting ‘poopsicle.’ Their bodies, when healthy, are able to handle heavy loads of bacteria. Indeed, these behaviors may be best understood as an underlying need for ‘living’ foods. For everyone's protection it is important that safe food handling practices are used in the home. All thawed food should be refrigerated and fed within 36 hours.

## WHY DO YOUR MEALS INCLUDE DIATOMACEOUS EARTH (DE) AND CLAY?

A mix of food grade DE (70%) and calcium bentonite clay (30%) is included in BCs Best meals as a natural source of trace minerals. DE/Clay is a natural worm preventative and can assist the body in removing toxins. Many wild species consume this “dirt” on a regular basis, presumably for these many health benefits.

