

COMMON MYTHS AND CONCERNS ABOUT FEEDING RAW

• DOGS ARE OMNIVORES.

Dogs are carnivores, not omnivores. This is very well-supported by the evidence available to us.

Your dog or cat's impressive teeth are designed for grabbing, ripping, tearing, shredding, and shearing meat (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 258.). They are not equipped with large flat molars for grinding up plant matter. Also, Dogs and cats have the internal anatomy and physiology of a carnivore (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 260.). Dogs have the shorter foregut and hindgut consistent with carnivorous animals. This explains why plant matter comes out the same way it came in; there was no time for it to be broken down and digested.

Dogs do not normally produce the necessary enzymes in their saliva (amylase, for example) to start the break-down of carbohydrates and starches; amylase in saliva is something omnivorous and herbivorous animals possess, but not carnivorous animals. Nor do dogs have the kinds of friendly bacteria that break down cellulose and starch for them. As a result, most of the nutrients contained in plant matter—even preprocessed plant matter—are unavailable to dogs.

The dog's dentition, internal and external anatomy, physiology and even its evolutionary history say it is a carnivore.

• DOGS ARE TOO FAR REMOVED FROM WOLVES AND THEREFORE CANNOT HANDLE A RAW DIET .

The only truth found in this statement is that humans have changed dogs. BUT, we have only changed their external appearance and temperament, NOT their internal anatomy and physiology. The result of feeding dogs a highly processed, grain-based food is a suppressed immune system and the underproduction of the enzymes necessary to thoroughly digest raw meaty bones (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones). This does NOT mean, however, that the dog does not "have" those enzymes. Those enzymes are present, and once the dog is taken off a grain-based diet those enzymes quickly return to the proper working level that allows for optimal digestion of raw meaty bones.

In fact, dogs are so much like wolves physiologically that they are frequently used in wolf studies as a physiological model for wolf body processes (Mech, L.D. 2003. Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation). This next quote is from Robert K. Wayne, Ph.D., and his discussion on canine genetics (taken from www.fiu.edu/~milesk/Genetics.html).

"The domestic dog is an extremely close relative of the gray wolf, differing from it by at most 0.2% of mtDNA sequence..."

Lastly, dogs have recently been reclassified as *Canis lupus familiaris* by the Smithsonian Institute (Wayne, R.K. "What is a Wolfdog?" www.fiu.edu/~milesk/Genetics.html), placing it in the same species as the gray wolf, *Canis lupus*. The dog is, by all scientific standards and by evolutionary history, a domesticated wolf (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 472.).

• RAW MEAT DIETS ARE NOT BALANCED.

Yes, **all-meat** diets are NOT balanced. You cannot feed a diet of just meat to your dog and expect it to do well. Your dog needs bones and organ meat as well to obtain the proper nutrients. Most of the nutrients in vegetables—even pre-processed ones—are unavailable to your dog (see the omnivore myth for further

reference). The alternative? Feed according to the prey model and provide variety. If you are feeding a variety of raw meaty bones and organ meats, then your diet will be balanced. Raw foods contain the exact proportions of fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes a dog needs.

• THE BACTERIA IN RAW MEAT WILL HURT YOUR DOG.

Dogs are surprisingly well-equipped to deal with bacteria. Their saliva has antibacterial properties; it contains lysozyme, an enzyme that lyses and destroys harmful bacteria. Their short digestive tract is designed to push through food and bacteria quickly without giving bacteria time to colonize. The extremely acidic environment in the gut is also a good bacteria colonization deterrent. Although rare and unusual, the bacteria in raw meat might make your dog sick IF the dog already has an immunocompromised system or some underlying problem.

The dog, plain and simple, can handle greater bacterial loads than we can.

• MY DOG WILL ACQUIRE PARASITES.

Yes, there can be parasites in raw meat. But if you are getting meaty bones and carcasses from places fit for human consumption, the parasite factor is negligible. Most parasites are a non-issue and can be safely dealt with by your dog if it is healthy.

There is a very low incidence of these parasites in meat deemed safe for human consumption. If the dog looks like it has parasites, simply get a stool sample or blood sample taken. A dog can be wormed holistically or allopathically (the chemical insecticide dewormers). But generally speaking, if your dog has a healthy immune system, it can deal with the parasites before they even get a chance to establish themselves.

Freezing meat can help kill many parasites (such as the parasite present in salmon; freezing fresh raw salmon, steelhead, trout, and other salmonids for at least 24 hours before feeding effectively disposes of the parasite.) As long as one exercises caution in obtaining their meat, parasites are a non-issue.

• RAW-FED ANIMALS POSE A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH RISK TO HUMANS.

Raw diet critics tout this myth as a main reason for not feeding raw. Yes, there is bacteria in raw meat. So if a raw-fed dog licks you, are you going to get sick? On the whole: no, you will not get sick. This bacteria does not persist in the mouth of a raw-fed canine. Canine saliva contains lysozyme, an enzyme that lyses and destroys bacteria, but more importantly, the absence of plaque from eating raw meaty bones means the dog's mouth is no longer a hospitable place for bacteria to inhabit.

As for dogs shedding bacteria in their feces: even a kibble-fed dog regularly sheds salmonella and other bacteria. The responsibility is the same, clean up after your dog, wash your hands after cleaning up after them, and you will not need to worry.

• RAW MEAT WILL MAKE MY DOG BLOODTHIRSTY.

By nature the dog is a carnivorous predator. A dog that chases things (with or without killing them) is just being true to what it is: a dog. Feeding a dog meat is not going to turn a dog into some vicious animal that will attack every living thing that moves.

With the domestication of livestock and introduction of smaller pets, hunting and killing on their own became undesirable. People bred and selected dogs that could coexist peacefully with such animals but still retained enough prey drive to do things like retrieve and herd. This is why dogs retrieve balls and chase toys and animals that move quickly. It is interesting to note that herding breeds have coexisted

peacefully with the animals they herded without savaging or killing them, even while these dogs were fed raw meat and bones from the very same kinds of animals they were guarding.

The dog is, by nature, a predator, and will chase other animals because it is hard-wired to do so, not because it is bloodthirsty or has a taste for meat in the human definition of the words. Feeding raw does nothing to change this.

The dog should recognize the kids, the cats, and the small pets as a) part of its own family, and/or b) under the protection of the alpha leader (which should be you!). In all likelihood, you will see a calmer, happier pet that is more of a pleasure to be around—not only because he is not hyperactive from all the carbohydrates and additives in the kibble, but also because his breath will smell better and his coat will feel and smell softer and cleaner.

• RAW DIETS ARE INCONVENIENT AND EXPENSIVE.

A raw diet is as convenient as you make it, but it will always be more work than pouring preformed pellets into a bowl. But your pet's health should be much more important than convenience.

Raw feeding can also be as expensive as you make it. It can be more expensive at first until you find a reliable source for meat. Do not forget about all the money you will save on vet bills and from the artificial chewies and toothbrushes and toothpastes for dogs (since you will not need those anymore).

Buy in bulk. An extra freezer for your pet's food is optional, but that one-time investment definitely helps cut costs dramatically, especially if you have more than one dog or cat!

• VETS ARE THOROUGHLY QUALIFIED TO DISPENSE NUTRITIONAL ADVICE.

This is a difficult issue that is guaranteed to offend some people, particularly those in the profession. Nevertheless, while veterinarians perform much-needed services for our pets, they receive very little nutritional training. The training they do receive is often advocated by or even administered by the pet food companies. Their nutritional training comes from the incorrect view that dogs are omnivores (see omnivore myth) and can safely be maintained on a grain-based diet, even when scientific research has proven that canines and felines have no evolved need for carbohydrates. Perhaps that is why pets today are suffering from a variety of ailments linked to carbohydrate-rich, processed food (cancer, diabetes, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, hyperactivity, seizures, etc.). Here is one excellent example of the ties veterinary universities and veterinarians themselves have with the pet food industry:

MSU Presents Partnership Award

"Topeka, Kan. - Michigan State University (MSU) College of Veterinary Medicine recently presented the 2004 Partnership Award to Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc.

"The award recognizes the working relationship between the MSU and Hill's.

"Hill's provides financial and educational support to nearly every veterinary college in North America, as well as to veterinary students attending those institutions. This commitment to the profession includes Hill's sponsored teaching programs, residencies and faculty programs in veterinary schools and teaching hospitals all over the world."

—DVM News Magazine, August 2004 (edited and emphasis added)

The very institutions from which veterinarians receive their instruction are sponsored and taught by the commercial pet food companies. Simply put, vets are not educated in an unbiased manner on proper

nutrition. Most veterinarians are highly qualified individuals; however, their qualifications are for surgery, conventional disease diagnosis and treatment, and conventional drug prescription, NOT for nutrition.

Frequent Concerns:

Will my dog get E-Coli or Salmonella from a raw diet ?

Not likely, but it is possible, therefore our product is produced in a way to ensure that all bacterial counts are acceptable to human standards. The truth is that an animal with a healthy digestive tract should not be bothered even if subjected to such things.

Is the diet Balanced ?

This is absolutely a concern. That is why it is important that raw diet producers have years of feeding trials and nutritional advice and analysis of their product. We have found in our studies that if it is not correct, the side effects can be devastating. Feeding to Pregnant dogs, working dogs, growing dogs and older dogs show the biggest advantages or adverse effects if the calcium phosphorous ratio is not correct.

Will my dog get parasites from raw meat ?

The food you are feeding certainly needs to be kept at an initial freezing temperature to ensure that all such organisms are destroyed. You should, just as you would feeding any other diet, do routine stool checks to maintain optimum health.



Is it okay to mix “kibble” with raw ?

Absolutely not. The rate of digestion is much different. Raw food is known to digest at a rate of about 8 hours whereas processed can take up to 24 hours. This has the potential of causing a bacteria build up. This is why when you switch your dog to our food, we recommend you fast a day before introducing our food. We do not recommend a slow change over.

Are bones dangerous ?

Bones can be if you leave them to dry and splinter. We recommend you feed your dog at least one raw bone a week, but after one day of consumption, you take the bone away.

The Myths of Supplements

by [Jane Anderson](#)

It is unfortunate for people feeding raw that so many people have jumped on board to make their fortune by selling you unnecessary vitamins, supplements, and other such bits and pieces.

Some of these people genuinely mean well, but most don't. They already know the supplements and vitamins won't do anything for your dog (or cat, or ferret), but will be more than prepared to take your money.

How did this situation develop?

It's a combination of a few things happening including:

- The pet food industry has tried to make it look like feeding your dog is a difficult event. They want you to think that it takes an incredible amount of science to feed your dog, and that clearly the general public is so dumb, they would never work it out! Adding supplements gives the illusion that the food is "balanced", and

nothing could be further from the truth.

- The health food industry is a machine which is designed to make money. Forget about trying to make you healthy. There's no profit in healthy dogs or healthy animals. Providing useless supplements, vitamins, etc which provide no value, without "fixing" the underlying health problems, is a fantastic way of corporations and individuals to keep a great cash flow coming from a naive public.
- People with healthy dogs like to think they can make their dogs healthier by feeding supplements. Clearly all this does is make you feel better and is no benefit to your dog, nor your hip pocket.

When supplements and vitamins are added to commercial dog products via the manufacturer they are invariably transformed by the cooking process, and ruined. It's a bit like buying a fantastic pair of shoes, then putting them in a furnace for an hour, then bringing them out, expecting them to give you the same level of satisfaction as before they were cooked. Just as it would be ludicrous to expect your shoes to be fine after a cooking process, the same goes for vitamins and supplements.

There is little evidence, if any, to suggest that adding supplements and vitamins is of any benefit to your dog. In fact, the benefit comes from giving the illusion it will make your dog healthier, or cure it's health problems.

Let me be clear, the best way to provide a solid platform for the health of your pet is to feed it an appropriate raw diet. This is a diet that is designed for a carnivore. Any diet that comes from a can, a packet, or is designed for an omnivore (and if you think dogs are omnivores, it's time to wake up to yourself!), is inappropriate for your dog.

You need to feed a diet which is based on the "prey model". A dog in the wild would feed on whole raw prey, or scavenge parts thereof.

Any person who states that the digestive tract or the needs of the "modern" dog are any different from that of a wild dog, is either deliberately trying to deceive you, or needs to quickly update their own education.

There is no excuse for deception of the public.

Supplements that your dog doesn't need:

- Cod Liver Oil
- Flax Seed Oil
- Colostrum

- Missing Link (another fantastic way to waste money!)
- Vitamin E, Vitamin C, etc
- Grape Seed Extract
- Garlic
- Brewers Yeast

.... and they don't need veggies or fruit.

Are Supplements Harmful?

They can be. On many occasions, I've been emailed by people new to raw feeding who have found their dogs not improving, or indeed, their dogs being in worse condition than before. I always ask them what they are feeding. Invariably they include a plethora of supplements and vitamins. The first thing I tell them to do is remove all supplements, vitamins, etc from the diet.

On most occasions it becomes clear to the pet owner within a week, that one of the causes of their current problems is this supplementation which they have provided. Not only have the supplements cost them a small fortune, but they have made their dog's condition worse!

Don't let this happen to you!

Supplements are processed

Feeding a raw diet is all about feeding naturally. Any processing of food is absolutely discouraged. 99.9% of supplements and all vitamins are processed. This means they are rendered in a way which changes their form, making them almost impossible for the body to use. In some instances, the supplement can actually cause a health problem in your dog.

The best "alternative" is to feed your dog a natural form of that particular substance. For example, rather than feeding fish oil (and expecting some amazing result!), [feed your dog fish](#).

And some supplements are completely wrong. For example flax seed oil, which some claim is a fantastic supplement, is grain based, as well as being highly processed. Dogs do not have a digestive system designed to eat grains or associated products. As such, feeding this sort of thing, can actually cause health problems in your dogs.

In summary

Feeding supplements and vitamins etc is not recommended. In some instances it causes its own set of health problems.

If your vet recommends such, there's a clear indication that he/she needs more education. You can recommend they join the vet [email list](#) which covers such subjects.

Remember, people everywhere make a living out of gullible pet people. Save your money, and use it to buy better quality food for yourself and your pets.

Myth: DOGS ARE OMNIVORES.

This is false. Dogs are carnivores, not omnivores. Dogs ARE very adaptable, but just because they can survive on an omnivorous diet does not mean it is the best diet for them. The assumption that dogs are natural omnivores remains to be proven, whereas the truth about dogs being natural carnivores is very well-supported by the evidence available to us.

1.) Dentition

Look into your dog or cat's mouth. Those huge impressive teeth (or tiny needle sharp teeth) are designed for grabbing, ripping, tearing, shredding, and shearing meat (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 258.). They are not equipped with large flat molars for grinding up plant matter. Their molars are pointed and situated in a scissors bite (along with the rest of their teeth) that powerfully disposes of meat, bone, and hide. Carnivores are equipped with a peculiar set of teeth that includes the presence of carnassial teeth: the fourth upper premolar and first lower molar.



This is the skull of a weasel (also in Order Carnivora), courtesy of [Centennial Museum](#). The carnassial teeth are marked with black arrows. You can find these same teeth in the mouth of your dog or cat or ferret.

Contrast this with your own teeth or the teeth of a black bear. A black bear is a true omnivore, as are we. We have nice, large, flat molars that can grind up veggies. Black bears, while having impressive canine teeth, also have large flat molars in the back of their mouth to assist in grinding up plant matter. Dogs and most canids lack these kinds of molars. Why? Because they don't eat plant matter. Teeth are highly specialized and are structured specifically for the diet the animal eats, and the difference between a bear's teeth and a dog's teeth (both species are in Order Carnivora) demonstrates how this can be (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pgs 260.). To see a visual comparison of the teeth of a dog to the teeth of a black bear, please click [here](#). One can logically ask: If a dog (or cat or ferret) has the dentition of a carnivorous animal, why do we feed it pelleted, grain-based food?

2.) Musculature and external anatomy

Dogs (and cats) are equipped with powerful jaw muscles and neck muscles that assist in pulling down prey and chewing meat, bone, and hide. Their jaws hinge open widely, allowing them to gulp large chunks of meat and bone. Their skulls are heavy, and are shaped to prevent lateral movement of the lower jaw when captured prey struggles (the mandibular fossa is deep and C-shaped); this shape permits only an up-and-down crushing motion, whereas herbivores and omnivores have flatter mandibular fossa that allows for the lateral motion necessary to grind plant matter (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pgs 258-259.). Consider this quote from the previously-cited Mammology text:

"Canids, felids, and mustelids subsist mainly on freshly killed prey. These families show correspondingly greater development in 'tooth and claw'; they also have greater carnassial development and cursorial locomotion." (pg 260)

This translates to a simple fact: everything about a dog or cat's body design says they were designed for a carnivorous, hunting lifestyle geared toward killing prey. However, humans have done some major tinkering with this body design (resulting in varying sizes and conformations), but we have done nothing to change the internal anatomy and physiology of our carnivorous canines.

3.) Internal anatomy and physiology

Dogs and cats have the internal anatomy and physiology of a carnivore (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 260.). They have a highly elastic stomach designed to hold large quantities of meat, bone, organs, and hide. Their stomachs are simple, with an undeveloped caecum (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 260.). They have a relatively short foregut and a short, smooth, unsacculated colon. This means food passes through quickly. Vegetable and plant matter, however, needs time to sit and ferment. This equates to longer, sacculated colons, larger and longer small intestines, and occasionally the presence of a caecum. Dogs have none of these, but have the shorter foregut and hindgut consistent with carnivorous animals. This explains why plant matter comes out the same way it came in; there was no time for it to be broken down and digested (among other things). People know this; this is why they tell you that vegetables and grains have to be preprocessed for your dog to get anything out of them. But even then, feeding vegetables and grains to a carnivorous animal is a questionable practice.

Dogs do not normally produce the necessary enzymes in their saliva (amylase, for example) to start the break-down of carbohydrates and starches; amylase in saliva is something omnivorous and herbivorous animals possess, but not carnivorous animals. This places the burden entirely on the pancreas, forcing it to produce large amounts of amylase to deal with the starch, cellulose, and carbohydrates in plant matter. Thus, feeding dogs as though they were omnivores taxes the pancreas and places extra strain on it, as it must work harder for the dog to digest the starchy, carbohydrate-filled food instead of just producing normal amounts of the enzymes needed to digest proteins and fats (which, when fed raw, begin to "self-digest" when the cells are crushed through chewing and tearing and their enzymes are released).

Nor do dogs have the kinds of friendly bacteria that break down cellulose and starch for them. As a result, most of the nutrients contained in plant matter—even preprocessed plant matter—are unavailable to dogs. This is why dog food manufacturers have to add such high amounts of synthetic vitamins and minerals (the fact that cooking destroys all the vitamins and minerals and thus creates the need for supplementation aside) to their dog foods. If a dog can only digest 40-60% of its grain-based food, then it will only be receiving 40-60% (ideally!) of the vitamins and minerals it needs. To compensate for this, the manufacturer must add a higher concentration of vitamins and minerals than the dog actually needs.

Is the dog an omnivore? Its dentition, internal and external anatomy, and physiology say it is not. Even its evolutionary history (discussed later) says the dog is a carnivore. So when people tell you the dog is an omnivore, ask: "What about this animal makes you think it is an omnivore?"

Make them explain their position to you before you explain yours. Chances are they'll cite this [next myth](#) as "proof".

Myth: DOGS ARE TOO FAR REMOVED FROM WOLVES/HAVE BEEN CHANGED TOO MUCH, AND THEREFORE CANNOT HANDLE A RAW DIET .

This is MOSTLY false. The only truth found in this statement is that humans have changed dogs. BUT, we have only changed their external appearance and temperament, NOT their internal anatomy and physiology. The claim that dogs cannot handle a raw diet because they are so domesticated is only true in that we have been feeding them commercial diets for so long that a dog's system is not running up to par. The result of feeding dogs a highly processed, grain-based food is a suppressed immune system and the underproduction of the enzymes necessary to thoroughly digest raw meaty bones (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones). This does NOT mean, however, that the dog does not "have" those enzymes. Those enzymes are present, and once the dog is taken off the grain-based, plant matter-filled food those enzymes quickly return to the proper working level that allows for optimal digestion of raw meaty bones.

Dogs are so much like wolves physiologically that they are frequently used in wolf studies as a physiological model for wolf body processes (Mech, L.D. 2003. Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation). Additionally, dogs and wolves share 99.8% of their mitochondrial DNA (Wayne, R.K. Molecular Evolution of the Dog Family). This next quote is from Robert K. Wayne, Ph.D., and his discussion on canine genetics (taken from www.fiu.edu/~milesk/Genetics.html).

"The domestic dog is an extremely close relative of the gray wolf, differing from it by at most 0.2% of mDNA sequence..."

Dogs and wolves can freely interbreed and produce fertile offspring—even little dogs like Westies and Chihuahuas are capable of this! This is a dramatic indication that dogs and wolves are very closely related and are compatible in terms of genetics (incompatible animals do not produce viable, fertile offspring, such as donkeys and horses. Their offspring—the mule—is a sterile animal.). The genes for different coat colors, lengths, conformations, and structural differences are present in the wolf population to a certain degree (otherwise wolves would not have been able to give rise to the different dogs we have today. In order for a phenotypic change to occur, there has to be a genetic basis off which to work. If the genes are not there, then the phenotypic change is not going to "magically" occur), but are selected against by nature because they are not advantageous to wolf survival. Humans are the ones that manipulated the breedings to "create" smaller dogs and dogs of varying colors, shapes, and sizes.

Additionally, dogs that are left to their own devices in the wild will form packs and hunt other animals, exhibiting a similar range of behaviors like those seen in wolves. Phenotypic

differences like size, ears, etc. will often return to a more "wolf-like" state as the animals outcross and breed freely (for example, Chihuahuas will increase in size if left to breed without specific human selection for size); breed characteristics have been specifically selected according to human whim, and in order to retain those characteristics like dogs must be continually bred to like dogs until the genes for those characteristics are sufficiently 'fixed' within that population of dogs (which is how we came upon the different dog breeds today). One can rightfully question what dogs would end up looking like if they just bred for generations without human interference. Would they gradually look more and more like their ancestral predecessors?

Lastly, dogs have recently been reclassified as *Canis lupus familiaris* by the Smithsonian Institute (Wayne, R.K. "What is a Wolfdog?" www.fiu.edu/~milesk/Genetics.htm), placing it in the same species as the gray wolf, *Canis lupus*. The dog is, by all scientific standards and by evolutionary history, a domesticated wolf (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 472.). Those who insist dogs did not descend from wolves must disprove the litany of scientific evidence that concludes wolves are the ancestors of dogs. And, as we have already established, the wolf is a carnivore. Since a dog's internal physiology does not differ from a wolf, dogs have the same physiological and nutritional needs as those carnivorous predators, which, remember, "need to ingest all the major parts of their herbivorous prey, except the plants in the digestive system" to "grow and maintain their own bodies" (Mech, L.D. 2003. Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation.). The [next myth](#) will discuss a dog's "changed needs" to cooked food more fully.

What about the argument that dogs may have weaker digestive enzymes than wolves? Some argue that dogs may not be as efficient as wolves in digesting raw meat and bones. This argument has been recognized by wolf researchers (Mech, L.D. 2003. Wolves: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation.) but is generally not considered in their dog model studies. Why? From mouth to anus, dog and wolf physiology and basic anatomy are almost precisely the same. What is the significance of this? This means dogs should still be fed a carnivorous diet to meet their needs. What does it matter if they don't have the same digestive capabilities as a wolf? How does that justify feeding them an even harder-to-digest meal of commercial pet food or cooked food? How does that justify feeding them any differently from a prey model diet that has been proven by nature to be completely sufficient?

Let us forget the wolf-dog relations for a moment. Let us just look at the dog itself and listen to what its body can tell us about its diet. The dog has the anatomy and physiology of a predatory carnivore, of a hunter designed to subsist on other animals. It has the skull and jaw design of a carnivore: a deep and C-shaped mandibular fossa that prevents lateral movement of the jaw (lateral movement is necessary for eating plant matter). The jaw muscles are designed for crushing grips and powerful bites, with a jaw that hinges open widely to help gulp chunks of meat and bone. The teeth of the dog are pointed and specialized for ripping, tearing, shearing, and crushing meat and bone. Their saliva lacks amylase, the enzyme responsible for beginning carbohydrate breakdown; instead, they have lysozyme in their saliva, an enzyme that destroys pathogenic bacteria. They have highly elastic stomachs designed to stretch to capacity with ingested meat and bone, complete with incredibly powerful and acidic stomach acid (pH of 1). Their intestines are short and smooth, designed to push meat through quickly so that it does not sit and putrefy in the gut. Their external anatomy also shows development as a hunter. They have

eyes situated in the front of their skulls rather than to the side like an herbivore. The body (prior to man-made manipulation of things like size and angulation) is built for chasing down prey, and its senses are acutely developed to help locate prey. By all accounts, this is an animal designed to eat other animals.

Dogs still are carnivores. They still need meat, bones, and organs. They still cannot utilize vegetables as efficiently as meat. Their nutritional needs have not changed much over their years of domestication. Do they need supplemental enzymes, then? The small amount of stool coming out the other end of a raw fed dog clearly indicates that there is no need for extra enzymes (medical conditions requiring extra enzymes not included here). The best, most highly digestible diet for our domesticated carnivores is a prey model diet based on a variety of raw meaty bones and whole carcasses.

Myth: DOGS HAVE BEEN DOMESTICATED SO LONG THAT THEY HAVE ADAPTED TO COOKED DIETS.

This is false! Yes, dogs were domesticated from wolves thousands of years ago, and then selectively bred by humans for desired sizes, shapes, and characteristics. However, they have NOT adapted to a cooked food diet, as evidenced by the millions of pets sitting in the waiting rooms of veterinary clinics with periodontal disease, skin diseases, cancers, organ diseases, diabetes, obesity—diseases that have strong connections to cooked and processed foods. No, a cooked diet has not been kind to our animals.

Kibbled foods (which are cooked and highly processed) have only been around for the last 100 years. Evolutionary adaptations require much more time than this. The evolutionary changes—from gross anatomy down to the molecular level—that would be required for the development of such different digestive capabilities would take MUCH longer than the time that wolves have been living with humans.

So what were pets eating before the advent of cooked, processed, kibbled pet diets? They received hardly any cooked food, as food was a precious commodity that very few people would waste on something like a dog (remember, dogs have not always enjoyed the same social status they enjoy now). Instead, they received the human "waste food"—things people would not use or eat, which may have included a small portion of table scraps. By and large, however, the dogs foraged and scavenged on their own, or hunted small prey animals to supplement what little food they received at home.

And before this? Wolf-dogs hunted with their masters and hung around the camps, knowing they would receive whatever raw meat, bones, and offal were left over (Feldhamer, G.A. 1999. Mammology: Adaptation, Diversity, and Ecology. McGraw-Hill. pg 472.). Thousands of years ago, people did not cook for their pets. Why should they? The animals were fully capable of obtaining their own food and moreover were a good "disposal" for unused parts of animals. The dogs ate what they were designed to eat, and until the 1950s (some argue as late as the 1980s and 1990s), dogs were recognized as the carnivores they are.

For more about why home-made, cooked food diets are not a completely viable alternative to raw, please read the [Cooked Food](#) myth.

Myth: DOGS ARE LIVING LONGER LIVES BECAUSE OF THE BETTER NUTRITION PROVIDED BY KIBBLE.

This is false logic. Dogs are living longer today because of improved social status and advances in medical care. "Back in the day" dogs were not considered the valuable family members and companions they are now. Dogs were left outside to brave the elements. They were guardians of house, possessions, and livestock. Dogs had a purpose, a job, and when they could not do that job, they were retired or disposed of. Medical care for dogs was scant and typically unimportant, as more prestige was gained from being a livestock vet than a canine vet. Very little notice was given to the dog's health as long as it could still do what was asked of it.

Nowadays, dogs enjoy a better life, one that is easier and less taxing (except for the great injustices that are kibble and excessive vaccination). They sleep inside with their owners. They enjoy the social status of family companions. People care more about their welfare. They receive the benefits of improved health care—much of which has evolved in the last 50 years because of the ailments caused by processed foods—and the added bonus of people caring about them receiving that care. For example, 100 years ago people would have never paid thousands of dollars to give their dog a hip replacement, or hundreds of dollars to get routine dentals performed on their pets. Nutrition has had a very negligible role to play in increased longevity other than the fact that dogs are no longer starving and do not have to hunt or scavenge (both of which are energetically costly). Instead of contributing to longevity, these "nutritional advances" have contributed to more and more health problems previously unheard of in dogs—diabetes, various cancers, inflammatory bowel syndrome, and bloat, for example. Veterinary medicine has evolved into 'modern veterinary medicine' because of the increasing prevalence of processed food-related diseases and the need to treat and fix them (which often involves switching your dog onto a higher-priced "therapeutic" processed diet). Granted, these diseases are diagnosed more frequently today because people actually know what to be looking for, but the amount of dogs suffering from these ailments today as opposed to earlier dogs indicates a VERY strong link to the foods they eat, links that have been proven to exist between humans in developed countries and processed foods.

What about increased longevity? Dogs' longevity has only recently been determined by 'research' performed by the pet food companies. They use these estimates to "show" that their food helps animals live longer. But longer compared to what? No one cared about canine longevity in the earlier days (except the select few concerned with breeding canines), so no one kept records or performed surveys. So this longevity estimate is only valid from when the surveys started. Indeed, kibbled food has been improving from the early prototypes that created a variety of nutritional deficiencies (like overgrowth and bone malformations in puppies; this STILL is a problem.), but this "nutrition" has not contributed to longevity in nearly the same manner that increased social status has.

In reality, canine longevity and quality of life has been decreasing for many breeds since the advent of processed food. People who remember the 'old days' when dogs were fed raw meaty

bones often report their dogs living well through their late teens. Nowadays it is a "miracle" and a testament to the "excellent nutrition" the dog must have received, and vets and pet food companies claim this "miracle" as occurring often enough to become 'commonplace'. Too bad most of the vets who remember the good old days have now retired or even moved on. It seems this new generation of veterinarians will know nothing but kibbled, processed food and the ailments induced by it.

So they say dogs are living longer. And indeed people can step forward and say they have 16-year-old Golden Retrievers and 14-year-old German Shepherds and 11-year-old Great Danes. But what about the quality of life for these old dogs? They have horrible teeth and rancid breath, severe arthritis or degenerative joint disease, cancerous or benign tumors, diabetes, kidney failure, nasty greasy coats, and soft fatty bodies lacking muscle tone. People say this is just "old age" and that we see this more often nowadays because dogs are living longer. But is this really true? Many of these ailments are caused by or heavily influenced by a lifetime of eating processed food and developing periodontal disease and bacteria-laden teeth (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones.). Those who remember the 'early days' remember long-lived dogs enjoying better quality lives until one day they just did not wake up. This slow, accumulating progression of disease is invariably linked with processed foods—something that has been proven time and again in human medicine and is being proven daily by the amount of processed food-fed pets suffering from a variety of these ailments and sitting in vets' waiting rooms.

If pets are living longer, then why are they being considered "old" at younger and younger ages? A dog is now a senior by the age of 7 or 8; some even say a dog is "old" at 5 or 6. Cats are considered seniors by the ripe old age of 7 (tell that to raw fed cats still going strong at the age of 20!). This premature aging is caused in large part by processed foods (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones.). Cancer, diabetes, obesity, kidney failure, heart problems, and arthritis (among other things) are being seen in younger and younger dogs. Dogs 3 years of age are being euthanized for malignant, systemic cancers! What happened to this "dogs are living longer" claim? It is high time we stop slowly poisoning our beloved friends through commercial diets and excessive "preventative" health care measures!

TIDBIT: The oldest living raw-fed dog is Jerry, an Australian cattle dog-bull terrier mix. He is 27 and lives with his owner in Australia (Outback Mongrel Could Be Oldest Dog. USA Today. 7-13-2004.). To see the full text story, please click [here](#) (if this link does not work, please tell me; it may mean the story has moved elsewhere).

Myth: MILLIONS OF DOGS ARE SAFELY EATING 'COMPLETE AND BALANCED' COMMERCIAL FOODS EACH DAY.

This is a statement that is more of an observation, but one that is false on many subtle levels. One can easily point to these millions of dogs and say that kibble is not all that bad. It is then implied that raw diets are not necessary because dogs can eat commercial foods and still be healthy. But let us think about this statement and all its associated issues. Is kibble safe? Is it healthy? Are raw diets really necessary?

Millions of dogs eat kibble. And millions of dogs—at least 85% of all dogs—suffer from periodontal disease by age 3 as a result of eating these processed foods (Penman, S. and P. Emily. 1991. Scaling, Polishing and Dental Home Care. Waltham International Focus. 1(3): 2-8. In Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones. pg 110). This translates to teeth covered with plaque and teeming with bacteria. These bacteria get into the gums and provoke the body's inflammatory response continually for the rest of the animal's life. Dogs (and cats!) are doomed to have nasty teeth and rancid breath. "It's normal," people said. "Dogs are supposed to have bad dog breath."

But as greater awareness of periodontal disease and its effects on the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, joints, skin and other systems of the animal grew, so did the industry for 'alleviating' the problem. Now you can buy a myriad of dental chews and plaque-scrubbing "bones"—most of which work minimally. Special dental formula foods were formed to clean pets' teeth, but these effects are inconsequential. Vets hand out toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental washes, and dental bones to their clients' owners, instructing them to brush their carnivore's teeth regularly and to schedule frequent dental cleanings for the pets—dental cleanings that cost hundreds of dollars. Instead of treating the problem at its source, veterinarians and pet food companies and pet industries market hundreds of different products and services that are simply band-aids and attempts to cover up the problem. It is not an industry motivated by the welfare of our pets, but by greed and money.

Millions of dogs eat kibble, and millions of dogs fill the waiting rooms of veterinarians, bad breath and all. These pets suffer from dermatitises of all sorts, or from cancers, joint problems, heart problems, kidney problems, digestive problems ("lack of enzymes"), liver problems, pancreas problems, coat problems, tooth problems, anal gland problems, glandular disorders, allergies, and soft doughy bodies brought on by eating a grain-based, artificial, highly-processed, additive-filled food touted as "healthy" for your dog. Thousands of dogs die from diet-induced diseases like bloat each year (and that is not to say all diseases are caused by diet, but many of them link strongly with processed diets and diet-induced periodontal disease. Refer to Raw Meaty Bones for a more in-depth discussion.), and yet the industry keeps on churning out artificial pet foods and vets keep recommending them to their clients.

Most veterinarians do not know any better; most vets receive on average only 8 hours or less education on pet nutrition (in their 3-4 years of study). Much of their nutritional education is sponsored or even administered by pet food companies (to read more about just what goes on in vet school nutrition classes, please read "A First Year Veterinary Student Comments" in the 13 April 2004 [RMB Newsletter](#)). In addition, they receive a good deal of revenue by selling special "veterinarian-administered only" commercial diets designed to "fix" and cover up the problems created by artificial diets in the first place. There are weight management formulas for older or obese dogs, special diabetes formulas for diabetics, protein formulas for kidney patients, easily-digested formulas for older patients or those with digestive problems, hypo-allergenic formulas for dogs with allergies. For almost every ailment there is another commercial food designed to help the poor suffering animal, and pet owners are now forced to keep their pets on this expensive, processed food that will "manage" the problem. Ironically, most of these diseases are dramatically improved by taking the pet off a processed diet and by feeding it raw meaty bones—the very food many vets say is unsafe and unhealthy for dogs. Think of how much

revenue would be lost if no one bought kibble from their vets, had healthy dogs, and did not need to get doggie dentals done. There would be a lot fewer veterinarians! Granted, veterinarians hold a valuable place in society, but they too need to look critically at these problems caused by processed foods. They need to step up and hold true to their creed of first doing no harm!! For more information about the link between the veterinary profession and the processed pet food industry, please read the [Vets and Nutrition](#) myth.

Millions of dogs are eating kibble, suffering from bad teeth and stinky breath, decreased longevity and quality of life, and underlying health problems. Millions of dogs are being maintained on an artificial, grain-based diets containing synthetic vitamins and minerals plus a myriad of chemical preservatives and additives—the collective effects of which have NEVER been researched. The key here is that dogs are merely existing. Sure, kibble (even "premium" kibble) is sufficient for keeping your dog alive, but is it the best, most appropriate food for your dog?

In a roundabout way, this brings forth the 'complete and balanced' claim. So many kibbles to choose from, so many proclaiming to be more 'complete and balanced' than the others. How can this be possible? Either it is complete and balanced, or it is not. Yet hundreds of brands all carry the claim bestowed upon it by AAFCO—'complete and balanced for the proposed life stage'—but exhibit a tremendous variety in quality. What does this 'complete and balanced' claim mean? This means 6 of 8 dogs were kept alive on that food for 26 weeks without any noticeable nutritional deficiencies. That is it. If a dog food does this, then it is considered complete and balanced enough to feed your pet for its entire life—even though nutritional deficiencies can take years to develop! Essentially, this complete and balanced kibble is only guaranteed to keep your dog (and millions of other dogs) alive with no noticeable side effects for six months. Please read the [AAFCO Standards](#) myth page for an in-depth look at their feeding trials and their nutrient profiles.

So according to the pet food industry and those in bed with it, millions of dogs are "safely" eating kibble with "no ill effects" caused by these diets (obviously, except for the hundreds of dogs killed or permanently injured by aflatoxins in various commercial foods over the years—Pedigree dog foods, Diamond Pet Foods, etc.). The problems dogs do have are the fault of someone else—the fault of the dog being a dog, or being poorly bred, or being fed a less-than-par kibble—not the fault of feeding a carnivorous animal grain-filled, pelleted, processed feed. Dogs and cats can apparently survive perfectly well on a diet devoid of freshness and life, eating the same processed pet cereal every day for their entire lives. No variety, and heaven forbid you offer table scraps or fresh food! Yet processed food has been deemed unhealthy for humans, and the recommendation is to stick with a variety of fresh, whole foods. The recommendation for our pets, on the other hand, is to never give them fresh whole foods because that could upset their delicately balanced, processed diet. Does anyone else see flaws in that logic?

Please note: raw diets are not a "cure-all". Many conditions can be improved and possibly even relieved by feeding a raw, species appropriate diet. However, the toxic burden on our pets—accumulated over years of repeat vaccinations, poor diets, pesticide administration, environmental pollution, and genetic chronic disease—is quite large and has undoubtedly contributed to the illnesses we see in our pets. Commercial diets are but one part of this problem,

BUT it is a large part. Diet is one of the cornerstones of total health, and if the diet is poor, how can the animal effectively fight off assaults on its system and repair the body? Feeding a species appropriate raw diet provides the animal with the best possible nutrition for total health. For more information on vaccines, homeopathy, flea/tick and heartworm medications, please visit the [Vaccines](#) page.

Myth: RAW MEAT DIETS ARE NOT BALANCED.

Yes, **all-meat** diets are NOT balanced. You cannot feed a diet of just meat to your dog and expect it to do well. Your dog needs bones and organ meat as well to obtain the proper nutrients. This means feeding a prey-model diet based on a whole prey animal. Remember that your dog has no needs for vegetables, and that most of the nutrients in vegetables—even pre-processed ones—are unavailable to your dog (see the [omnivore myth](#) and the [stomach contents myth](#) for further reference). The alternative? Feed according to the prey model and provide variety. If you are feeding whole animals or a variety of raw meaty bones and organ meats, then your diet will be balanced. Raw foods contain the exact proportions of fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes a dog needs.

One other concept of balance that should be addressed is the idea perpetuated by the pet food companies: "Dogs need complete and balanced nutrition in every meal." This is nothing but propaganda designed to make people buy into commercial dog food. This is not how the canine body—or any other body—operates! Take your own diet, for example. Do you eat a complete and balanced meal every time you eat? No! You eat a variety of foods over a period of time, and yet your body generally does very well and exhibits no signs of nutritional deficiencies. Dogs do not need "complete and balanced" nutrition at every meal. If they did, then any time they did not receive complete and balanced nutrition their bodies would get out of skew and problems would suddenly develop. This is not how it works. This is where one sees the concept of "balance over time" developing. This is the principle that many feel is adequate to explain how all living things obtain the proper nutrition. Nutritional needs are met over a period of time, and balance is achieved through time as the animal eats what it needs at the time it needs it or whenever it can get it. The nutrients the body MUST have and cannot synthesize for itself are supplied in sufficient amounts in the food the animal eats. Nutrients are stored within the body when they are eaten and are not needed, but when the need arises, they are essentially pulled out of storage and used. This is what allows animals (and people!) to fast for sufficient periods of time without starving or dying. They not only have fat reserves and protein reserves in their muscles, but stored up nutrients and vitamins in their tissues (fat soluble vitamins, for example, like A, D, and K).

One can logically ask: 'What is balance, anyway?' Balanced vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates, fats, and proteins? Can we ever conclusively know what balance is? How? No, this concept of balance is a myth. We hypothesize, guess, and draw up faulty food pyramids in attempts to define 'balanced' diets, yet as a society we are still plagued with obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and 'rare' bowel diseases like Crohn's disease that are becoming more commonplace (oddly enough, vets are seeing the same things occurring in our canine and feline counterparts). The food pyramid is being revamped as specialists argue about appropriate 'balanced' diets, which only further illustrates the truth that we do not know what balance is.

What about our pets? The standards for balanced pet food are approximated (and incorrect, I might add, since they are based on the myth that a dog is an omnivore. See the standards myth for more detail), and vitamins and minerals are added in excess to compensate for the decreased bioavailability of these nutrients in kibble. Dogs are fed "balanced" proportions of fats, proteins, and the carbohydrates that they have no need for whatsoever. Honestly, have you ever heard of an essential carbohydrate? There are essential fats, essential amino acids (obtained from protein), but no essential carbohydrates. Yes, an animal's body needs glucose to function, but glucose is easily made from amino acids via gluconeogenesis. Carbs are not necessary for our carnivorous pets, yet they are listed as part of a 'balanced' diet. For further discussion on carbohydrates, please visit the [Carbohydrates](#) page.

We can go one step further with this concept of balance. No one except nature conclusively knows exactly what is needed and in what proportions. Why? Well, a million years of evolution should be sufficient enough to show any naysayer that the diet nature provides for her creatures is precisely what they need to function, thrive, and survive. No one but nature knows exactly what the animal can actually use and absorb. We can only guess. So forget 'balance' of any kind when it comes to feeding our pet carnivores. There is no such thing as 'balance'. Think "carcass". "Carcass" is what sufficiently sustains wolves, dogs, wild cats, and ferrets, and that is what nature has perfectly provided for them. "Balance" is nothing but an insufficient human term, a vague concept that pet food companies employ to make people buy the foods for their pets. When feeding your pet carnivores, always remember the concept of "carcass".

Myth: THE BACTERIA IN RAW MEAT WILL HURT YOUR DOG.

This is discussion purely about bacteria and your dog. If you are looking for a discussion about dogs spreading bacteria to humans, go [here](#).

Yes, the bacteria in raw meat might hurt your dog IF the dog already has an immunocompromised system or some underlying problem. Raw diets have also been blamed for causing things like pancreatitis and kidney disease, when in reality the underlying disease was already there and was brought to light by the change in diet. Dogs are surprisingly well-equipped to deal with bacteria. Their saliva has antibacterial properties; it contains lysozyme, an enzyme that lyses and destroys harmful bacteria. Their short digestive tract is designed to push through food and bacteria quickly without giving bacteria time to colonize. The extremely acidic environment in the gut is also a good bacteria colonization deterrent. People often point to the fact that dogs shed salmonella in their feces (even kibble-fed dogs do this) without showing any ill effects as proof that the dog is infected with salmonella. In reality, all this proves is that the dog has effectively passed the salmonella through its system with no problems. Yes, the dog can act as a salmonella carrier, but the solution is simple—do not eat dog crap and wash your hands after picking up after your dog.

Even kibble-fed dogs regularly shed salmonella and other bacteria. Most of the documented cases of severe bacterial septicemia are from kibble-fed animals or animals suffering from reactions to vaccines. Commercial pet foods have been pulled off shelves more than once because of bacteria AND molds that produce a deadly toxin. The solution? Use common sense. Clean up well and wash your hands. And think about your dog—this is an animal that can lick

itself, lick other dogs, eat a variety of disgusting rotting things, and ingest its own feces or those of other animals with no ill effects. The dog, plain and simple, can handle greater bacterial loads than we can. Can dogs get sick from the bacteria? I suppose they can. But it is rare and usually indicative of an underlying problem, especially when one stops to consider how much bacteria that dog probably comes in contact with every single day. One must ask "Why this dog? Why now? What has made this particular dog susceptible to bacterial overgrowth?" Something is not 'right' regarding the dog's health—a healthy dog does not suffer from bacterial infections or bacterial septicemia. That is just common sense. A dog suffering from "salmonella poisoning" is obviously not healthy, especially when compared to a dog that ate the same food with the same salmonella load but is perfectly healthy and unaffected. The first dog has suffered a 'breakdown' in its health that allowed the bacteria to become a problem; if one is talking in homeopathic medicine terminology, this is simply one more symptom that shows the dog is suffering from chronic disease (see the [Vaccines page](#) for more information).

I put forth that it is the kibble, not the raw meat, that causes bacterial problems. Kibble in the intestine not only irritates the lining of the bowels but also provides the perfect warm, wet environment with plenty of undigested sugars and starches as food for bacteria. This is why thousands of processed food-fed animals suffer from a condition called Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth, or SIBO (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones. pg 85). Raw meaty bones, however, create a very inhospitable environment for bacteria, as RMBs are easily digestible and have no carbohydrates, starches, or sugars to feed the bacteria.

Can raw-fed dogs make other dogs sick? If the other dog has a suppressed immune system or some underlying problem, then perhaps a raw-fed dog can make another dog sick. But keep in mind the inordinate amount of bacteria dogs usually ingest anyway, not to mention the plaques of bacteria covering the teeth and gums of the kibble-fed dogs. People recall raw-fed dogs being the only dogs at dog shows that did not get sick with some communicable disease of some sort, and then instantly assume that it was those dogs that got all the other dogs sick. A more plausible explanation is that the raw-fed dogs have a much stronger immune system and are thus better equipped to fight off diseases and "canine common colds" that circulate at shows (and possibly that they have been vaccinated less than their kibble-fed counterparts, which results in a stronger immune system). For a more in-depth discussion of how processed foods suppress the immune system, please refer to Raw Meaty Bones.

Just some final thoughts on bacteria and raw: this is what finds its way into the "sterile" kibbled commercial foods:

"Meat products not intended for human consumption, such as inedible tissues, condemned portions of carcasses, and entire carcasses of condemned animals (eg, animals found to be dead, dying, disabled, or diseased at the time of slaughter), are also used for dog food. Because of the inherent nature of these products and the less stringent handling requirements, compared with products approved for human consumption, these products may contain high levels of bacterial contamination." (LeJuene, J.T. and D.D. Hancock. 2001. Public health concerns associated with feeding raw meat diets to dogs. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 219(9): 1222.)

And as for commercial foods being "bacteria free" (an assumption that is often inferred when people put down raw diets because of the bacteria):

"Pet foods, commercial or homemade, provide an ideal environment for bacterial proliferation." (LeJuene, J.T. and D.D. Hancock. 2001. Public health concerns associated with feeding raw meat diets to dogs. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 219(9): 1224.)

So do not be fooled into thinking kibbled, commercial pet food is a sterile, bacteria-free source of food! The starches, rancid fats, and sugars in kibbled foods provide much better food sources for bacteria than the proteins in raw meat.

For further information on salmonella and rawfed pets, please click [here](#) (note: AdobeAcrobat Reader is needed).

Myth: RAW-FED ANIMALS POSE A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH RISK TO HUMANS.

This is a myth made possible by our society's pathological fear of bacteria. Of the millions of bacteria on this earth, it is estimated that less than 1% are harmful. Media and society as a whole have played up bacteria, painting it as an evil nemesis that must be stomped out with disinfectants, antibacterial everything, and unnecessary vaccination. This has resulted in the emergence of super-bacteria and "super-viruses", no thanks to the improper use of antibiotics and the plethora of antibacterial soaps and products. Developmental biologists have recently learned that bacterial exposure is absolutely necessary for the development of a healthy immune system, among other things. Humans and dogs have evolved in the presence of bacteria, and insisting on a sterile environment has created more damage than good. So where does this intersect with raw feeding?

Raw diet critics tout this myth as a main reason for not feeding raw. Yes, there is bacteria in raw meat. Yes, this bacteria can harm you. Yes, this bacteria is sometimes shed in dogs' feces. So if a raw-fed dog licks you, are you going to get sick? I suppose all things are possible, but on the whole: no, you will not get sick. This bacteria does not persist in the mouth of a raw-fed canine. Canine saliva contains lysozyme, an enzyme that lyses and destroys bacteria, but more importantly, the absence of plaque means the dog's mouth is no longer a hospitable place for bacteria to inhabit. A kibble-fed dog's mouth, however, provides the perfect environment for bacteria growth: plaque-covered teeth with sugary and starchy complexes provide both food and shelter for bacteria. The bacteria thrive in the mouth of a kibble-fed dog because it provides both a perfect atmosphere and a good food source (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones.). Why does a kibble-fed dog have stinky dog breath? Because of the bacteria in their gums and on their teeth (just like the bacteria in our mouths gives us halitosis). A raw-fed dog's mouth provides neither food nor a viable atmosphere for bacteria, which is why a raw-fed dog has odorless breath. So which dog would you be more worried about being kissed by and contracting disease from? I personally would be quite leery of the stinky-breathed, bacteria-laden kibble-fed dog. If one is still worried about being licked by a raw-fed dog, one has several solutions. Teach the dog not to lick, or avoid being licked. But if you have a healthy immune system, being licked and in contact

with a raw-fed dog will not affect you other than boosting your immune system. This is the same thing for kids: being around and licked by a raw-fed dog will do nothing but boost their immune systems and help them grow up into happy, healthy adults.

As for dogs shedding bacteria in their feces: do not eat dog poo and wash your hands after feeding your dogs or cleaning up after them. Handle the raw meat you feed your dogs the same way you handle your own raw meat (which can get you sick if you eat it raw or do not clean up well enough afterward; do the experts really think that people are not smart enough to figure out that they should wash their hands and countertops after preparing raw meaty bones for their dogs? Apparently so.). If you have kids, teach the children not to eat dog poo and clean up immediately after your dog, and you will not need to worry. Bacteria is absolutely everywhere. You are just as likely, if not more likely, to get sick from your produce or a strange bathroom. You do not need to worry about the dog tracking bacteria through the house; there is plenty of bacteria throughout the house anyway, so any additional bacteria a raw-fed dog might add is negligible. Thousands of people—even immunocompromised people—feed their dogs raw with no bacteria issues and with stronger immune systems as a result.

Anti-raw people protest that raw-fed dogs pose a serious health risk to immunocompromised people and people with auto-immune disorders. Oddly enough, it is these immunocompromised people who have a better understanding of the important role nutrition plays in strengthening the immune system. A quick tour of the Yahoo! Rawfeeding group will reveal quite a few people who have an auto-immune disorder but have been feeding their dogs raw for many years with no ill results whatsoever. Anti-raw people (vets included) make it sound like immuno-compromised people (and most other people) are incapable of properly handling raw meat and cleaning up afterwards. The solution proposed—do not feed raw meaty bones!—is absurdly condescending (they assume we cannot clean up after ourselves and are incapable of feeding our dogs because we lack a credential in pet nutrition), and skips the most logical step: simply observe proper hygiene and use the same precautions you use in preparing your own meat. It is not that difficult, honestly.

People proclaiming this "serious health risk" claim seem to think people are incapable of a) properly feeding their dogs and b) cleaning up after themselves. Use good hygiene practices: clean countertops and utensils used to feed dogs, and wash your hands. Feed the dog outside or inside on a towel or plastic-type tablecloth you can reuse and wash when needed. Or feed the dog in its crate, or on an easy-to-clean surface. By training the dog to eat in one place, you will not have to "worry" about him tracking a mess or bacteria through the house. If you are still concerned about bacteria, clean your dog's paws, mouth, etc. with a mild, safe antimicrobial like diluted white vinegar. Honestly, as long as proper hygiene is observed, the bacteria are a non-issue. Remember, you are sharing your life with an animal that licks its own rear and eats cat poop before licking your face.

For an excellent article on the risk of salmonella infection and rawfed pets, please click [here](#) (note, Adobe Acrobat Reader is needed).

Myth: RAW DIETS DO NOT MEET THE AAFCO STANDARDS AND ARE INFERIOR TO COMMERCIAL FOODS.

Vets, canine 'nutritionists', and pet food companies will tell you that raw diets do not meet the established standards for pet nutrition—the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) standards. AAFCO approval is the "Golden Seal" of quality when it comes to pet foods, and because raw diets do not have this seal of approval, many imply that they are inferior to commercial foods. But what are the AAFCO standards? How did AAFCO come up with these standards? Should they be viewed as the "Golden Seal of Approval?" Is it a valid argument to compare commercial, processed foods and raw foods using these standards?

AAFCO standards and nutrient profiles were established through collaboration between scientific experts in the industry, in academia (such as universities), and in the regulatory commission (National Research Commission, or NRC). These experts looked at the peer-reviewed literature and documented data available to them and then formulated nutrient profiles after collaboration. These nutrient profiles have been updated once and are scheduled to be updated again. At this point I would like to note that Nature's nutritional standards for dogs and cats has not changed within the past several thousand years since the species' existence (hundred thousand and even million years if you include their ancestors).

Some argue that AAFCO profiles are the best there is, but others argue that AAFCO profiles are simply 'better than nothing.' Indeed, the standards can lull people into a false sense of security about the food they feed their pets. They think it is nutritionally complete, when in reality it may not be truly complete. Additionally, AAFCO profiles have not been tested or reproduced (and one of the biggest principles of science is that the method must be reproducible and the results verifiable.). There are no studies that prove "their adequacies or inadequacies" (Quinton Rogers, DVM, PhD, as quoted in "Alternative Feeding Practices" by Susan Wynn. To see the full article, click [here](#).). It is, at best, an educated guess as to what our animals really need, and is based on less-than-scientific principles.

There are several other things wrong with these standards that AAFCO uses to ensure foods are 100% 'complete and balanced.' The standards were developed based on the belief that dogs are omnivores and can be properly maintained on a grain-based diet. They are therefore irrelevant to raw diets. Why? First, to gain nutritional analysis, the food must be chemically denatured, cooked, purified, and otherwise manipulated, meaning that any reading is an inaccurate representation of the raw item. This also means that the interactions between nutrients are overlooked as each nutrient is studied separately rather than in conjunction with the others (and this will be discussed below).

Second, the NRC profiles (which AAFCO used to develop its own profiles) assume 100% bioavailability. However, if a dog is fed as an omnivore, there are good amounts of nutrients unavailable to it that are contained in the indigestible plant matter. [Phytates](#) in particular (contained in abundance in grains and soy products—which kibbles often contain in substantial amounts) are well-known for interfering with valuable nutrients like iron, zinc, and calcium. Hence, you have to feed more of these nutrients in order for the dog to get the amount it needs; what the dog actually needs and uses is NOT the same amount of nutrient initially added. This results in skewed and biased standards, as they list the initial nutrient amount added, not the amount absorbed. Thus, bioavailability is less than 100%, and the nutrients in the standards are therefore inaccurate representations of what the dog really needs.

There is a third reason why AAFCO standards are useless for raw foods. This deals with the reason the food is raw and not cooked. AAFCO standards are based on cooked or processed foods (processed in order to be evaluated), foods which already have a decreased nutritional value because of being cooked or processed. Cooking denatures proteins and collagen, destroys important nutrients, and generally makes the food less digestible and less bioavailable (the exception being grains and vegetables, which we have already determined should not be given to dogs anyway). This means essential vitamins and minerals must be added back in. But how much? In what amounts? Research has shown that synthetic vitamins do not work with the same efficiency as those found in their natural state (i.e. in raw foods). Additionally, many vitamins and minerals interact with each other both negatively and positively. For example, vitamin C increases the uptake of iron, whereas Vitamin E inhibits the uptake of iron. Vitamin C also lowers zinc and manganese uptake, whereas Vitamin E helps increase zinc and manganese absorption (www.acu-cell.com/nico.html). Commercial pet foods should contain all of these nutrients, but are they contained in the proper amounts? And just what is a 'proper amount'? The difficulties for establishing proper amounts have already been discussed. Do they have methods for monitoring the complex interactions of all these nutrients? Since feeding trials simply look at palatability, survival, and the appearance of health, these complex interactions are ignored. Cooking and processing food also kills enzymes that may help with the digestion of the food and the processing of nutrients, so the bioavailability of vitamins and minerals in cooked foods is further reduced (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones. Chapter 4.).

Let us also look at the actual AAFCO feeding trials themselves. Are these really the 'Golden Seal of Approval' that pet food manufacturers make them out to be? AAFCO feeding trials consist of at least eight dogs being fed the same diet for a mere 26 weeks (approximately six months). During this time, 25% of the dogs (so, two animals) can be removed from the test and the dogs eating the food can lose up to 15% of their weight and condition; the food will still pass the test and be labeled "complete and balanced." But extrapolate these figures to the number of animals eating this food for much longer than 26 weeks and you will have much more of a problem! If a food caused dogs to start losing condition over the 26 week period yet still passed, imagine how many animals would fail to thrive in real life while being fed this food for years?

As long as the remaining dogs in the trial appear healthy and have acceptable weights and certain blood values, the food passes and is considered 'complete and balanced' nutrition for whatever lifestage for which it was tested (puppy, adult maintenance, geriatric, etc.). So it can now be fed to your pet for a period much longer than the six-month test period. However, AAFCO feeding trials were NOT designed to measure the long-term effects of commercial diets. It says so right in their mission statement (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones. pg 216). AAFCO trials were designed to ensure that pet foods were not "harmful to the animal and would support the proposed life stage" (pg 216, Raw Meaty Bones.) for a period of 26 weeks. The AAFCO protocols were NOT designed to "examine nutritional relationships to long-term health or disease prevention" (pg 216). If a dog lives for six months with no noticeable ill effects on a kibble, then the food is considered 100% complete and balanced nutrition, even though long-term nutritional deficiencies may occur several years down the road.

These "complete and balanced" and "not harmful" pet foods can destroy long-term health and cause disease and yet still be marketed as a healthy food for your pet. This has been PROVEN

true. An example would be the lamb and rice commercial diets that had **met or exceeded** the nutrient profiles of AAFCO, and that had **passed** the AAFCO feeding protocol yet **created a taurine deficiency** in the dogs that ate them (Torres, C.L.; Backus, R.C.; Fascetti, A.J.; and Rogers, Q.R. Taurine status in normal dogs fed a commercial diet associated with taurine deficiency and dilated cardiomyopathy. Journal of Animal Physiology and Animal Nutrition. 87 (2003). 359-372.). The dogs suffered from dilated cardiomyopathy; what is particularly distressing is that dogs can synthesize taurine from the readily-available (at least, in raw food) amino acids methionine and cysteine (whereas cats cannot), yet they still developed cardiomyopathy from this AAFCO-approved food! As a result, taurine is added into many commercial diets, but what about the dog owners whose pets became seriously ill and perhaps even died as a result of this oversight? What other "unknown oversights" are waiting to be discovered through more pain and anguish inflicted upon our pets? Other examples of 'oversights' would include supplementing cat foods with taurine after cats were going blind and suffering heart problems, or the constant adjustment of calcium:phosphorus ratios in puppy foods to prevent bone malformations and improper growth patterns (which still occur despite all the supplement adjustments). Interestingly, natural calcium in raw bones does not cause these malformations to the same degree artificial calcium does. One has to feed a LOT more natural calcium via bones to get the same degree of skeletal malformations found in commercial fed pets. All the researchers had to do was look to nature for the correct ratios.

When making their commercial processed foods, the pet food companies must often oversupplement their foods with the various vitamins and minerals to fall within the range of accepted nutrient values—the effects of which are NOT monitored past the six months of the AAFCO feeding trials. It should also be noted that pet food companies are not required to divulge the specific results of AAFCO testing of their products; that information is only made public if the company chooses to do so! Additionally, not all foods are required to enter feeding trials (The February 2007 edition of the Whole Dog Journal had an excellent article on this topic as well.). A food can undergo laboratory analysis to determine if it meets the nutrient requirements for dogs and cats. However, those nutrient requirements—expressed as minimum and maximum values—can vary widely! The minimum iron requirement for dogs, for example, is 80 mg/kg. The maximum iron requirement is 3,000 mg/kg! This is an incredible difference, and yet one food on the low end can be just as "complete and balanced" as another food with the maximum amount for iron! How will this affect the dogs over long term? Will one animal show a deficiency while the other shows an excess? The industry does not know, because they have never been required to test this beyond the 26-week mark! Foods can also obtain "complete and balanced" status by being 'grandfathered in'. If a company can show that one of its new foods bears "nutritional similarity" to one of their own existing products that underwent feeding trials (which allow for the removal of 25% of the dogs and loss of condition up to 15% over the course of 26 weeks), then that food can carry the same claim of 'complete and balanced'. Yet the actual ingredient combination was never tested! How can this similar yet different food be 'complete and balanced' for the *lifetime* of the animal if it was never adequately examined or tested? The entire process is faulty, but it is the best the pet food industry has. If this is the pet food industry's **best**, then what does that say about their 'complete and balanced' commercial foods? Hopefully one can now see why the AAFCO standards are useless for evaluating raw food diets and why they are incomplete in determining the actual "nutrient standards" needed and utilized by our pets.

Contrast this with a whole prey animal. Raw food's "best" is a brutal battle for survival over a span of several million years. Species evolved and adapted to their environments, thriving on fresh raw foods. If wolves and dogs have survived the worst of nature while eating fresh raw prey, what does that say for raw diets? A whole raw prey animal (unprocessed and NOT ground), or whole raw foods, contain the exact proportion of fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes. One will be hard-pressed to test this in a lab, as the testing itself alters the perfect proportions. Nature's laboratory is how we know it is perfect. This is the food that keeps wolves, other canids, and felines alive and thriving, even in the face of intense pressures and hardships (many of which are man-induced!). Nutritional deficiencies arise because the animals cannot get enough to eat, NOT because the food is insufficient in nutrients. Who are we to think we can do better than nature? For further reference, please read [Raw Meaty Bones](#).

Myth: THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TO BACK RAW DIETS.

"You know, the very powerful and the very stupid have one thing in common. They don't alter their views to fit the facts. They alter the facts to fit the views, which can be uncomfortable if you happen to be one of the facts that needs altering."

— Dr. Who

The implication here is that because there is "no scientific research" performed by institutions like the American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA), raw diets should not be fed. This 'no scientific research' declaration is a cop-out claim that has been used to "debunk" raw diets and suppress the truth. But one must realize that there is NO evidence whatsoever to prove that kibbled, processed foods are **good** for your pets. The only research that has been done into processed foods was performed to see a) if dogs could be fed a grain-based food, b) if dogs could survive acceptably on these processed foods for a short period of time, c) if X brand of food can do such-and-such for the dog (help with kidney disease, help with diabetes, help with obesity), and d) if X brand of food is "better" (more palatable, better liked, less total stool volume, etc.) than Y brand of food. No research has been done to determine the long-term effects of feeding kibble, nor to determine if it is actually *healthy* for your dog (it is just **assumed healthy** because it has passed a 6 month feeding trial, and then manufacturers falsely advertise their product as healthy.).

But as for raw diets: one million years of evolution apparently is not enough evidence for those citing lack of research and lack of studies in scientific literature. Neither the anatomical and physiological evidence of dogs, nor mtDNA evidence, nor circumstantial and statistical evidence of diseases in processed food-fed pets, nor anecdotal evidence are enough from those belying the lack of "studies" and "research". Anecdotal, eyewitness evidence is dismissed because it is scientifically "unfounded" and anecdotal, even when the evidence is standing right before their eyes in easily seen, wonderful health (It is interesting to note that eyewitness evidence is enough to help condemn a man in a court of law, but is not enough for the "scientific" community composed of pet food manufacturers and their affiliates—which include vet universities and most vets.). People then expect raw feeders to take their anecdotal and eyewitness evidence as truth when they have already dismissed the evidence offered by the raw feeder as anecdotal. "I've seen so many dogs come into my clinic with nutritional problems because of raw diets!" (What about all the sick commercially fed pets that come into your office?) "Bones are going to kill

your dog" (Oh yeah? Says who? Prove it!). This distinct bias has been used in veterinary literature to "prove" raw diets are not as good as commercial:

"Although there are numerous claims to the health benefits of raw food diets, **all are anecdotal**...The raw bones included in many of these diets carry risks, and **although the actual incidence of complications resulting from ingestion of raw bones is unknown**, there are reports of intestinal obstruction, gastrointestinal perforation, gastroenteritis, and fractured teeth..." pg 706, **emphasis added** (Freeman, L.M. and K.E. Michel. Evaluation of raw food diets for dogs. *JAVMA*. 218(5): 705-709)

The claims of raw food diets are dismissed as anecdotal, and then the readers are later asked to consider the similarly anecdotal, undocumented "reports" against raw food diets! This is nothing but a head-in-the-sand approach that attempts to maintain the status quo.

There is a lack of "scientific" evidence in the form of research studies on raw diets. Why? Well, who is going to pay for an extensive research study on raw diets when the evidence may be damning? People point to all the studies done by commercial pet food companies and cite the lack of similar studies done on raw diets as evidence that raw diets are bad and inferior. But let us look at how studies actually come about.

First, you must come up with a hypothesis and a purpose. What are you studying? Why are you studying it? What do you expect to prove? After you figure this out you design your study, including methods, control groups, and variables. You draw out everything in great detail, and then you incorporate this into a grant; after all, you need a large amount of money to run your study. So where do you get the money? You look at individuals, corporations, and companies that might be interested in your project. Some of the bigger companies and corporations already have pre-existing grant monies for which you can apply. Other times you have to present the grant to a company and ask for funds that have not already been set aside into a specific grant. How do you ensure the receipt of this money? You appeal to people who will have a great interest in what you are doing. You appeal to the companies that in some way have a financial interest in what you are studying (for example, a biomedical company that wishes to branch out from artificial joints into artificial menisci and artificial vertebral discs—which happen to be what you are studying!), and will therefore fund your project so as to find out more; it just might pay off for them in some way. That is the key: you are approaching companies that may offer you money because there will be something in it for them.

But what happens if the results actually reflect unfavorably upon the product you are testing or the method you are studying, and therefore reflect unfavorably upon the company that makes said product or endorses said method? It depends on how much is at stake. If there was very little at stake initially—perhaps it was a small pilot study with the company looking to see if artificial menisci might even be worth their time—then there should not be a problem. It tells them what they wanted to know and it was not a big loss (Some would argue that perhaps pet food companies did this with raw diets. But if that was the case, they would have all the facts and figures reflecting negatively on raw food readily available; they could simply parade out the results of that study to prove once and for all that raw diets are worthless. But, they do not do

this. Why? Because they do not have these results.). But what if billions of dollars and an entire existing superstructure were at stake? What will happen to the results? In human medicine, this has led to the suppression of information, such as the suppression of information regarding the dangers of Vioxx (To read more about how this happens in industry, visit Mercola.com).

Now let us apply this to the pet food manufacturers and to studies into raw diets. Almost every single study performed on commercial pet foods has been partially or fully funded by pet food companies. An example would be Purina's own study on extending the life of your pet; they discovered that by feeding smaller amounts of their Purina dog food and thus keeping the dog from getting fat, you could extend the life of your dog by two years. This, of course, supports the already well-known thought that keeping your pets trim is better for their health (once again, scientific "studies" being used to prove what is common sense.). But by using only their food in the study, they can then insinuate that it is Purina dog food that extends the life of your pet—and the little asterisk on the ad or the fine print on the TV tells you that this is only if you feed less than the recommended amount on the bag, thereby keeping your pet trim and not fat. But who reads the fine print?

Let us look at raw diets. Who would support a good, solid study into raw diets? What would happen if the results reflect negatively on commercial diets and positively on raw diets? Think of how much they have to lose!! Personally, I feel the lack of studies and the lack of willingness to do studies on raw diets indicates a desire to hide something, to cover something up that people do not want to be found. And I know of no pet food company that will pay for a raw diet research study. None of their control groups in their own studies are even fed a raw diet! The studies are performed under false assumptions that dogs are omnivores and can be maintained healthfully on grain-based, processed diets. Interestingly enough, it was the scientific research of the pet food companies that helped prove that dogs have no need for carbohydrates. The research in their own files (and in the Waltham Book of Dog and Cat Nutrition) demonstrates perfectly well that they know dogs are carnivorous animals. And yet they continue to mislead the public, the veterinarians, and the vets-to-be.

There have been "studies" done on bacterial content, nutritional analysis (according to AAFCO standards), and parasites in raw meat (using only the old, pre-existing literature on what kind of parasites could possibly be found in raw meat), but there are no studies that go in depth and objectively study the health effects of raw diets. Why would there be? This would involve a long, intense study requiring collaboration of vets nationwide and of multiple pet owners, or undue suffering to hundreds of "test" dogs who must be fed improper raw diets in the name of "scientific objectivity" (and there is the possibility that these poor results would then be used to show that ALL raw diets are bad). Indeed, funding is a huge issue as well, but I feel there are underlying issues: a fear of what may be found, that raw diets will indeed be proven better, that commercial diets will be proven unhealthy. This drastically cuts against the status quo and would destroy pet food companies and the veterinarians who depend on them to provide a clientele.

If raw diets were proven better and commercial diets were proven harmful, there would be a tremendous backlash against the pet food industries and the veterinary profession that is so entrenched with it. Legal ramifications would be a highly probable option: people suing vets for recommending a product that harms their pets; people suing the pet food companies for

creating a harmful product without warning consumers of its dangers, for falsely advertising that product as healthy, and for lying and covering up the information that indicated otherwise; and vets suing the universities for providing an inadequate, faulty education. Thousands of people would be laid off, a multi-billion dollar industry would crumble, hundreds of veterinarians would find themselves jobless, and society would no longer have an 'acceptable' outlet for disposing of its dead, dying, and diseased meat, its grain waste, and the some 40% of euthanized pets that find their way into rendering plants and kibble, barbituates and all (Lonsdale, T. 2001. Raw Meaty Bones.; Martin, A. Foods Pets Die For.). All of this is what they have to lose if the results of a raw diet study reflect unfavorably on commercial foods. Can one see the incentive in never performing or publishing a proper study that objectively looks at raw diets and their effects on the overall health of the dog? Note: if you are a pet owner, veterinarian, or veterinary student who feels wronged by the pet food companies or their close ties to veterinary universities, please visit the [Raw Meaty Bones](#) website to get information on your legal options (click on the "Legal Remedies" link). Additionally, in the UK an organization known as UKRMB has helped spearhead an Early Day Motion against the alliance between pet food companies and the veterinary profession. To read about it, please click [here](#).

This is not the only consideration when it comes to raw food research. To perform an adequate study that would satisfy all the critics, hundreds of dogs would need to suffer needlessly on improperly prepared raw diets, because in the name of 'science' all the major variations of the diets would be tested. That means dogs will be fed all meat diets, all chicken-back and neck diets, veggie glop and some meat and mostly bone diets, all beef-heart diets, etc. when all the researchers need to do is look to nature, who got it right a million years ago. It is just needless suffering. Next time someone bemoans the lack of scientific studies about raw, ask them if they would like to volunteer their dog for the study.

Instead of pushing for, funding, and advocating an unbiased study (which is a good thing in the sense it spares animals from unnecessary suffering in the name of science), vets and other "scientifically minded" people point out the lack of studies and retreat behind that facade in an effort to save face while ignoring a million years' worth of scientific studies performed in nature's laboratory. But there are some cruelty-free studies that could be performed; for example, researchers could start looking at the incidence of periodontal disease in raw-fed and commercially-fed pets. However, even something this simple-sounding can be a difficult thing to do correctly, as there are many variables that must either be minimized/weaned out of the study or that will have to be included. Plus, it requires a large sample size and great collaboration among pet owners, the vets, and the researchers. Once again, though, we come to the main impetus behind the study: who will pay for it, and why?

Myth: RAW DIETS ARE NOT VERY DIGESTIBLE.

If the diet is based on vegetables, then no, it is not very digestible. Whoever uttered this statement (actually, several veterinary doctors have uttered this statement in articles, some of which are posted on the web!) has the burden of proof on them; it is up to them to prove this statement since everything we know about raw foods, including literature discussing the digestibility of wolves' food in the wild, indicates that raw diets are VERY digestible.

This is the primary evidence: dogs fed a raw meaty bone diet produce stools that are one-third the size of the voluminous stools of kibble-fed dogs. That equates to a two-thirds size reduction in fecal output!! This indicates a higher digestibility; vets and dog owners know this very well. Smaller stools = better digestibility. Raw diets are 90-97% digestible (includes the bone!!), whereas most kibbled foods are 40-70% digestible (some of the better, holistic kibbles have higher digestibilities than this figure). This explains why most kibble-fed dogs have such huge poops: most of it is undigested grain and filler, also known as "fiber". Even premium dog kibbles, while more digestible than many other kibbles, yield stools that are rather large compared to a raw-fed animal's poop.

If someone thinks raw diets aren't very digestible, then they must answer the question of where all that meat and bone go! It is ingested in large quantities and then comes out the other end in small, odorless, well-formed stools. If it is not very digestible, then what happened to all that "undigestible" stuff?

Myth: RAW DIETS ARE INCONVENIENT AND EXPENSIVE.

Since when does convenience replace the welfare of our pets! Oh, that's right; kibbled foods are very "convenient" but also fill our pets with toxic additives and carbohydrates they do not need, creating a myriad of health problems and shortening the lifespan and reducing the quality of life for our pets. Yes, we trade "convenience" for the health and welfare of the very animals that depend on us for their care.

A raw diet is as convenient as you make it, but it will always be more work than pouring preformed pellets into a bowl. But your pet's health should be much more important than convenience. If not, then why do you own a pet?

Myth: DIFFERENT BREEDS OF DOGS NEED DIFFERENT KINDS OF DIETS.

This is absolutely false. Unfortunately, this premise—based on nothing but phenotypic differences in canines depending on region and utility—has been used by both commercial pet food companies and raw-promoting people to create "designer diets" that can be quite unsound in regards to nutrition. This truly is a fad that is designed to take unknowing consumers' money and make a big profit. The idea that Salukis should have mostly goats milk, dates, and very little meat because there is hardly any meat in the region they come from is absolutely preposterous! These claims fail to take into account that all dogs have the same internal anatomy and physiology and the same nutritional needs despite size and breed. For example, view the different skulls of dogs on this site [here](#) (scroll one-third of the way down the page); all of them have the same kinds of teeth that dictate carnivory! A Shi Tzu has the same elemental nutritional needs as a Great Dane; the only difference is that the Shi Tzu has to eat much less to satisfy those needs. The short time that the dog has been domesticated and that specific breeds have existed in various parts of the world is not long enough for an evolutionary need for the foods of the region from which they originate to be developed.

If we look at this further from a practical, common sense point of view, we are faced with a powerful question: What about mutts? If dogs have "evolved" in that short time period to eat only the foods from the regions in which they were developed, then what do you feed a dog that has a variety of different dogs contained in its heritage? Most of the time people can only guess what breeds of dogs contributed to their loving pet, and if dogs had to be fed a designer diet, they would be at a loss for what to feed it. Thankfully, canine heritage and nature herself point to the proper answer: feed a raw prey-model diet.

The claims that dogs have different coats and shed differently, or have different bone structure, or produce more or less of coat oils are NOT sufficient to indicate each breed needs a designer food. Every part of every dog is made of the same building blocks. Bones are ALWAYS made up of osteocytes (bone cells), the hydroxyapatite matrix they secrete (contains mostly calcium and phosphorus), collagen, cartilage, blood vessels, bone marrow, periosteum. Muscles are ALWAYS made from connective tissue, myoblasts (muscle cells), myofibers, and blood vessels. The structures of every dog's body need the same building blocks: the amino acids provided by proteins, the fatty acid chains provided by fats, the glucose molecules for energy provided by gluconeogenesis that takes amino acids and turns them into glucose molecules, and a variety of vitamins and minerals—all of which are contained in the appropriate amounts and proportions in a whole prey animal. This means any dog can obtain all the nutrients they need from a prey animal, regardless of what breed they are. Their internal physiological processes are the same, even if their coat sheds differently or their bones are more dense. The physiological processes that lay down more bone matrix or that cause the coat to shed and grow in again all use the same building blocks that EVERY dog needs and can obtain in its beautiful raw form from raw carcasses. Each dog fuels its body processes using the same metabolic pathways that take amino acids and fats and turn them into glucose or glucose derivatives to provide the body with energy. Dogs utilize fuel at different rates, with means they have different metabolisms. Does this mean that they therefore need different foods to compensate for their different metabolisms? No. They just need different amounts of food to compensate for how quickly or how slowly they convert the food to energy and burn through it.

Every dog is an individual with individual tastes and reactions to food. This means you can get a Saluki that does not like chicken, or a dog of northern breeding that hates fish, or a German Shepherd that cannot have lamb because it repeats something fierce on it and gives it gas. Some Dalmations (a breed with a particular predisposition toward forming urate stones; if you wish to raw-feed a Dalmation, please research this predisposition and adjust the diet accordingly.) do fine with high purine meats, and others can only have low purine meats. This is where the raw feeding mantra of KNOW YOUR DOG comes into play. You are responsible for knowing your dog's likes and dislikes, what sits well with it and what does not. You do not need to be paying somebody to determine that for you. And most of all, you do not need to be paying them to formulate a special diet for your pet. Feed your pet according to the prey model, and adjust your sources as needed. If the dog gets sick of chicken, then cut back on the chicken and feed more of something else. If your dog does not do well with beef, then do not feed as much beef (or any, if you like). Once your dog has started and adjusted to the raw diet, start adding more and more variety in the form of whole carcasses, raw meaty bones and organ meat from a wide variety of animals. Over time you will learn the ins and outs of your dog's feeding habits, that perhaps rabbit is not your dog's favorite but that it really likes pork. Know your dog, and know that you

have the full capability to feed an appropriate prey model diet that can be tailored by you to your dog's needs and tastes while providing plenty of variety.