

# DEXTER'S DELI

## PET HEALTH GUIDE

Ref.3 v.11



# RAW FOOD BASICS

Your dog or cat needs more than plain meat to thrive.

Think of it as recreating a whole carcass, plus some extras.

## Benefits

- Vibrant Skin & Coat
- Stable, Healthy Weight
- Healthy Digestion
- Improved Immune System
- Reduced Allergy Symptoms
- Healthy Teeth
- Proper Endocrine Balance
- Improved Energy and Behavior

## Product Suggestions

- Sustenance Herbs CWB/ FWB Daily
- Herbal Energetics Pet Boost
- Health Force Green Mush
- Four Leaf Rover Green Rover
- Four Leaf Rover Red Rover
- Herbsmith Nutrients
  
- Four Leaf Rover Sea-Safe Oil
- Grizzly Pollock Oil
- Nordic Naturals Omega 3 Pet
- Mr. Ros Marine Phytoplankton
  
- Animal Essentials Seaweed Calcium
- Pet's Friend Eggshell Calcium
  
- Annamaet Enhance
  
- Green Juju frozen veggies
- Four Leaf Rover Guts & Glory
  
- Four Leaf Rover Protect

**BASIC FORMULA** The goal is recreating wild game, like deer, using ingredients that are available to us, and making up for some of what's missing with whole food supplements. The animal portion should be approximately 80% muscle meat, 12% bone, and 10-15% organs. After ensuring that general balance you'd add 5-20% more fresh plant foods. That translates to approximately 1/3 "raw meaty bones," 2/3 muscle meat and organs with a topping of plant foods. Weekly servings of whole fish and eggs and a whole food supplement really make it complete. Most but not all commercially prepared raw diets are close to this ideal, but because each brand has their own philosophy we encourage rotating through a variety of products.

**HOW MUCH TO FEED** The recommendation for most adult dogs & cats is to feed 2-3% of their ideal weight each day. For example, a 10 pound dog or cat would eat about 1/4 pound per day, a 40 pound dog would eat about 1 pound a day. *Young puppies & kittens may eat as much as 10% of their weight*, depending on their stage of development, so "2-3% of adult weight" still may apply. You can adjust this amount for your pet's needs (for example many active young adult animals eat 4%) but if your pet's needs fall far outside this guideline consider having a vet run some tests, such as a full thyroid panel.

**STORAGE** Handle your pet's raw food as you would any raw meat. Defrosting takes longer when bones are included so plan ahead if you do all your defrosting in the refrigerator. Raw food in your refrigerator should be used up within 3-4 days.

**INTRODUCTIONS** We've found that best way to introduce raw food to your pet is to offer a small amount as a snack separate from their meals. Once you've given it as a snack a few times you can replace a processed food meal with a raw meal and continue from there. If your pet refuses to try the raw food you can top it with broth, a delicious treat, or cook it lightly to enhance the aroma. Most prepared raw diets are finely ground and can be fed lightly cooked (just a few minutes on the stovetop will do it, use a nonstick pan or add a little water, don't fry it). If your pet won't eat chilled food, soak the food container in a bowl of warm water to bring it to room temperature, or drizzle a little hot water over it before serving. If your pet has a history of digestive upsets with new foods we recommend adding probiotics and digestive enzymes to your pet's current diet for 2-4 weeks before trying raw. We have an additional Guide for cats about switching foods as they can take longer to accept it.

**BONE SAFETY** Bones must always be fed raw, never cooked. Always supervise your pet when they're chewing on bones. Non weight-bearing bones, especially poultry bones such as necks, wings, and backs are suitable for dogs and cats to completely consume are known as "raw meaty bones" (RMBs) and are considered part of their diet. Always use parts that

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## Learn More

### Check out these books

- *Raw Dog Food: make it easy for you & your dog*
- *The BARF Diet*
- *Grow Your Pup with Bones*
- *Give Your Dog A Bone*
- *Real Food for Dogs & Cats*

### Reliable online resources

- [therawfeedingcommunity.com](http://therawfeedingcommunity.com)
- [feline-nutrition.org](http://feline-nutrition.org)

### Related Pet Health Guides available on our website

- Switching Cats To Raw
- Calcium
- DIY Veggies

**If you feed only one species of meat we *strongly* advise using a complete multi-vitamin/mineral supplement to avoid nutritional deficiencies over time.**

Your pet may need certain supplement to help balance their health, for example: raw apple cider vinegar, herbs (for general good care or for specific conditions), medicinal mushrooms, digestive enzymes, colostrum, or joint supplements. Ask our staff and discuss the issues with your holistic vet or practitioner.



are appropriate to your pet's size so they will chew them and not swallow them whole. Hard, weight-bearing bones (beef marrow bones, etc) are not meant to be eaten. They are called "recreational bones" and are meant to be scraped by the teeth. Always choose a larger recreational bone to avoid choking issues and for dental safety, it should never be small enough for them to put far into their mouth where they will bear down on it. Once they've cleaned it offer a high value treat as a trade and throw the bone away. Ask our staff for assistance in choosing appropriate bones for your pet.

**CALCIUM** Your pet needs raw bones or a calcium supplement for a complete diet. Feeding meat without bones or calcium will lead to bone loss and other serious illnesses. Some simplified commercial raw formulas have no bones or calcium included, so be sure to read the label carefully so you know what's included.

**MUSCLE MEAT** Use mostly very lean meat. Too many calories from fat may result in less being fed, leading to lower nutrition (this is why we only sell skinless necks). On commercially prepared formulas read the Guaranteed Analysis and look for foods that have about twice as much protein as fat, with the fat amount around 10% (these numbers only apply to raw food "as fed"). Rotating between formulas is the best way to achieve this balance over time. Be sure to include plenty of red meat, not just poultry.

**ORGAN MEAT** Liver, kidney, and spleen (filtering organs) provide essential nutrients; these parts shouldn't be ignored. You should *at least* include liver. If you do not feed organ meats you *must* use supplementation, either a multivitamin or freeze-dried organ powder. The amount of organ meat in the diet should be 10-15% of the total animal portion of the diet (10% if only using liver).

**PLANT FOODS** They are the richest source of natural antioxidants. For dogs the veggie portion should be 5-20% of their total food. For cats the veggie portion should be 0-10% of their total food. Variety is essential, with a focus on above ground plants, especially leafy greens. Small amounts of fruits (especially berries) add nutrients too, though tropical fruits are very high in sugar and should be kept to a minimum. Root vegetables should be only a small portion of the mix, and always cooked for digestibility. Problems can arise if certain classes of plants are overfed such as raw cruciferous vegetables (they should be lightly cooked to avoid goitrogenic properties) or those high in oxalates (spinach, chard), so as always variety is important. If adding veggies yourself you should grind them in a food processor so that all the nutrition is available to your pet's digestive system. See our Guide on how to make your own veggie mix for more ideas.

**OMEGA-3 FATS** These would normally come from the food itself, but most farmed meat is deficient so supplementing with oil high in Omega-3s such as fish oil is important. You can use whole fish for this purpose, but never feed raw salmon or trout (due to parasite risk). Marine Phytoplankton is an alternate source of Omega-3s. If you supplement with *large* amounts of fish oil be sure to add Vitamin E too.

**EGGS** Pasture-raised eggs are almost the perfect protein, with EFA's and essential trace minerals. Dogs benefit from eating an egg 1 to 3 times a week (depending on their size). This can be fed raw or lightly cooked, and with or without the shell. See our Guide on calcium to learn how to make your own calcium powder from eggshells.

**TRIPE** A unique and natural addition to a raw food diet, is the stomach and grass contents of cows. It is a highly digestible source of enzymes, probiotics, and essential fatty acids.