



ABERDEENSHIRE RAW DOG FOOD

STARTER GUIDE

IF YOU ARE STARTING RAW – PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MESSAGE ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU PLACE YOUR FIRST ORDER

There are a lot of different options out there but the more you read, the more you can decide what you agree with and what you don't. Then you can come up with your own way of feeding raw. It's all about being able to provide the very best food customised to your dogs and with time, you will learn what best for you and your dog. Raw feeding is also often called BARF, prey model etc, however, don't get hung up on labels – it's all raw – just slightly different presentations!

HOW MUCH DO I FEED?

Firstly, you need to work out how much to feed your dog. A good place to start is 2 – 3% of the body weight of an adult dog. This can be split over 2 meals

5 -10% for puppies split over 4 meals until approx. 3 months. Then 3 meals, then eventually down to 2 meals.

This will give you a starting point and then you can adjust accordingly, please stay flexible as these are just guidelines and might not suit your individual dog as they are all different and have varying activity levels. Increase or decrease the amount according to how your dog looks after a few weeks on raw food. With a healthy dog you can feel the ribs and they have a waist.

HOW DO I SWAP OVER?

You have 2 choices when swapping over to raw, either just do a complete swap. Stop kibble and go straight onto raw, or if you have some kibble to use up then you can feed raw on 1 meal and kibble on the 2nd meal. I don't recommend mixing kibbles that contain grain or gluten with raw as this can cause upset stomach as dogs digest raw and kibble at different rates.

If you wanted to continue with a mix of kibble and raw, I do sell a brand that combines fantastically with raw foods and contains really great natural supplements. I have moved my own dogs to this method with fantastic results.

HOW DO I START?

Many sources recommend to start with feeding tripe for approx. 4 to 5 days. However, in my experience many people find this off putting, not only because of the smell but also quite often people find their dogs get very loose stool or their dog's poo may go a bit black during this time, so I often advise to skip this step – which people have done to great success

I normally recommend that people start with either chicken or turkey for a week. You then introduce a different protein for example duck & tripe, turkey & tripe etc. You can continue to feed this protein for another 3 – 4 days and then go onto another protein and so on until you are able to feed all protein options.

Keep an eye on your dog's poo. It may go white for a few days as this is your dog's body trying to digest the bone in the food – this is due to increased calcium. After about 3 days this should reduce, and a more normal colour will resume. If your dog's poo remains white, then contact us and we can talk through other options.

You will find that poos will generally become smaller and better formed.

Any problems or anything you are not sure of pop me a message

If your dog starts itching more than normal then ring me, he may have an allergy to a certain protein (normally chicken). If this happens, we can eliminate that protein from the raw diet and you will notice a massive change in any previous problems that may have occurred previously, like ear infections, scratching or pinkness on feet or around eye areas.

COMPLETE MEALS OR NOT?

You want to aim to have a good varied diet, the more variety the better the balance and the less likely a chance of your dog missing out on important nutrients.

Complete meals are an average of 80% meat, 10% offal and 10% bone content, so if you feed these you do not have to worry about your dog's missing out on nutrients, Feeding Complete meals are the easiest way to feed raw as all the hard work is done for you! However, Complete meals aren't for everyone. Some prefer to make up the meals, so they know exactly what their dogs are eating.

I currently only sell complete meals, however will be able to source chunks, minces bones etc should you wish to DIY – these currently are pre-order only.

If making your own meals, then 80% should be made up of meat (which includes hearts). Offal (10%) should be split into 5% liver and then 5% of either kidney, spleen, testicles or pancreas. 10% should be made up of bone.

We can help you with this, so just ask.

BONE

Bone is an essential part of the raw diet but careful not to give too much bone, which is a common mistake. I still do it!

Mine love to have a chew on bones – duck feet, ribs, wings etc and they are great for a dogs diet and offer additional stimulation and help maintain your dogs teeth. Never feed cooked bones!

I normally recommend you start with poultry wings, feet and some of the softer bones as an additional treat. On occasion, I will substitute their entire meal if I am giving larger bones or bigger portions, such as carcasses or meaty bones

If your dog's poo comes out very white, then reduce those bone treats that you give to help keep your dog's teeth sparkling white. A note here – in the summer loads of people come to me saying, suddenly their dogs' poo has gone white and they are panicking! Please remember that in the summer, if you don't pick up your dog's poo in the garden straight away, the sun will bleach the poo very quickly and make it look a lot whiter than it was when it first came out!!

If you are concerned that there is too much bone in a complete food for your dog, because he is constipated or his poo is white or crumbly, then feed offal as this gets the bowels moving. I always try to ensure I give my dogs a mix of proteins that help with this. For example poultry minces tend to be higher in bone, so if I feed poultry 1 day then the next I will try to feed something like beef & heart to level out the amount of bone in their diet.

However, be aware that on raw your dog will poo much smaller, firmer poos. This is totally normal and your dog should take longer to do this, which is a good thing as its making his/her anal glands to work so you wont have any anal gland problems in the future as they will naturally empty themselves when your dog is pooing. A good dog stool is reasonably small logs or nuggets, roughly the size of a large thumb, though they will vary in size between breeds. They should be firm and easy to pick up.

Currently bones are on a pre-order basis that I will get in at your request.

VEG OR NO VEG?

You can add in vegetables into your dog's diet to bulk it out a bit.

This helps especially if your dog needs to lose some weight. However, be aware that if your dog has allergies, vegetables can make it worse. So, watch if your dog starts scratching or biting his paws, then maybe stop giving veg and see if that makes a difference.

Personally, although I offer up veggies to my dogs, they tend to refuse them, preferring to go for just the meat. I still offer regardless as sometimes they choose to eat them. As mine are fussy I test them if I am cooking veg, I offer up some of the pieces that I have cut, if they like them, they get a portion.

BONELESS MEALS

I personally, once a week, like to feed my dog a boneless mince. Just to give them a rest from digesting bone. This is a personal choice. My dogs love the tripe meals so I try to give them goat tripe or green lamb tripe once a week. I hate the smell but they love it!

EGGS?

I give my dogs duck eggs 2 – 3 times a week. With the shell is always better as it has calcium and magnesium in the shell but some dogs won't eat them (my dogs wont and insist the egg also needs to be raw scrambled! The egg can be raw or cooked. Whatever way your dog prefers it.

FISH?

My dogs LOVE fish! But some dogs hate it oily fish is good for them. So, I have found a trick that works for fussy fish eaters.

Sprats work best. Often dogs will like them frozen as it's like a lolly pop and they can't taste it so much as its frozen! You can also get dried sprats which are a great treat.

If it is an absolute no from your dogs, adding a little salmon oil will give them great benefits without having to try and get them to eat fish

KEFIR?

Kefir is a probiotic that is SO good for humans and dogs. For dogs its best to use Raw Goats Milk to make it. Just ask about it if you want to give your dog Kefir

If you want to try either of these I can source them for you.

HUNGER PUKES!

Sometimes dogs get particularly hungry. This can result in them throwing up bile (yellow foamy stuff). Most of the time this will be overnight or early in the morning. So, the way to avoid this is to feed a 'supper' just before bedtime. I feed mine beef chunks before they go up to bed. But it can be anything like a few meat chunks or sprats.

HELP MY DOG DIDN'T EAT HIS DINNER

Because raw is a very satisfying meal, some dogs do well for a few meals then turn their nose up. This could just be because they're full (even some Labradors!), so throw away that meal and reduce the overall volume of their next meals. Let your dog be your guide and try not to get bogged down with how many grams they should be eating every day – My own dogs need far less than the recommended amounts!

Obviously this is only if they're otherwise well. Any sign of illness or secondary symptoms in conjunction with lack of appetite should warrant further attention.

HOW DO I KNOW THEY ARE THRIVING ON IT

The best indicator is appetite. Many dogs will self-regulate on raw food (that previously wouldn't on kibbles) because of the higher levels of satiety.

Faecal output can be another indicator. If the poo's very dry, white and crumbly, they could be consuming too much bone. If this happens, you can reduce the bone content, or up the level of offal and heart, or feed our complete meals, balanced for you.

But ultimately, you're going to be looking at body condition. Look for a good covering of muscle over the hips, shoulders and back, and you

should be able to feel but not see the ribs. This is harder in a dog with a longer coat but familiarity with weekly grooming sessions will help you get to know your dog's overall body condition.

If they're starting to add an extra layer of internal insulation, then reduce the amount given daily until you reach a happy balance. Remember, all dogs will vary in what they need, even through the seasons.

TREATS

We all just love our treats and dogs are no exception. I offer a range of treats with more to come. They can have great benefits – from furry treats to de-worm to tails for teeth cleaning and hooves for the joy and mental stimulation.

Natural treats may seem a little stinky but they have their own place in the raw feeding regimen which I personally offer to my dogs once or twice a week – personal faves include hairy rabbit ears, dried duck or chicken feet, hooves and hairy cow ears!