RAW Pet Food

What is raw pet food?

Raw pet foods and treats contain protein from an animal, like chicken and beef, and have not been cooked or heated to a high enough temperature to kill germs.

Some common ingredients:

- Uncooked muscle meat (like thigh and breast)
- Uncooked organ meat (like liver and kidney)
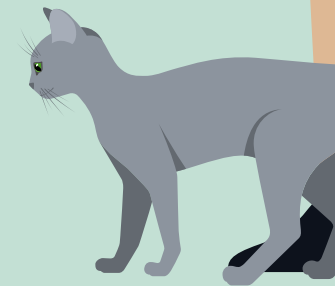- Uncooked bones
- Uncooked eggs
- Unpasteurized milk

Comes in many forms, like:

- Raw (like the raw chicken you buy from the grocery store)
- Raw frozen
- Freeze-dried (frozen and then dried in a vacuum)
- Dehydrated (dried using warm air)

Even treats and food toppers can be raw, like rawhide chews and freeze-dried treats.

The easiest way to identify a raw pet food product is to look for the word "raw" on the packaging. You can also check with the pet store or the pet food company.

CDC does not recommend feeding raw pet food or treats to dogs and cats.

Raw meat and other raw protein from animals can have germs like *Salmonella* and *Listeria*.

Raw pet food is not necessarily healthier.

FACT

- Both raw and cooked pet food can be made with high-quality or low-quality ingredients.
- Both raw and cooked pet food can be nutritionally balanced or inadequate.
- "Natural," "ancestral," or "instinctual" diets that are best for wolves and wild cats are not the best for pet dogs and cats that live at home and live longer lives.

Did you know?
Compared to wolves, pet dogs prefer and need foods that are lower in protein and higher in fat and carbohydrates.

If you're thinking about feeding raw food to your dog or cat

Talk to your veterinarian or a veterinary nutritionist.

They can help you decide what is best for your pet and family.

Consider these questions:

- Is anyone in your household, or anyone else your pet interacts with, more likely to get very sick from foodborne germs? This includes children under 5 years old, adults 65 years or older, people with weakened immune systems, and people who are pregnant.
- Do you have a pet that is more likely to get sick from foodborne germs? This includes puppies, kittens, and pets with a weakened immune system or other health conditions.
- Is the raw diet you plan to feed your pet complete and balanced? Will it help your pet thrive?
- Are you able to clean more frequently if you use raw pet food?

If you feed raw food to your dog or cat

Consider buying from companies that have high food safety standards. You can ask them:

- Does your company test all your final products for common foodborne germs like *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Listeria*?
- What does your company do to kill germs in your raw pet food products?
- How often does your company clean and disinfect the manufacturing facility?
- Does your company have veterinary nutritionists?

Clean often.

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling raw pet food.
- Clean items and surfaces that touched raw pet food.

Properly chill and store raw pet food that needs to be kept cold.

- Freeze it until you are ready to thaw and use it.
- Thaw frozen raw pet food in the refrigerator.
- Keep it in a sealed container in the freezer and refrigerator, separate from other foods.
- Throw away leftovers that have been out at room temperature.

> "If raw food is your pet's main diet, talk to your veterinarian or a veterinary nutritionist. They can help make sure your pet's raw food diet has all the nutrition your pet needs."

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