



Transitioning Your Pet to a Raw Food Diet:

With introducing anything new to your pet

Rule # 1 - Every pet is different and you know your pet best.

Rule # 2 - It is usually best to go slow! Make the transition gradually.

Rule # 3 - Observe your pet. Pay attention to his or her overall well being.

Do not go from processed pet food to prey - it's too big a leap!

Pets that have been fed the same food with no variation for a long period of time or pets under stress of any kind may have trouble with a sudden change in diet. Many people, with all good intentions, make the mistake of one day removing the dry kibble bowl of food and throwing down a side of raw beef or a whole raw chicken and expecting their pet to do what comes naturally! Or worse yet the well intended, but inexperienced, pet guardian begins mixing raw meat and bone into their pet's dry kibble and/or grain and starch-based canned commercial foods totally confusing their pet's digestion. More times than not you end up with a frustrated pet owner and a disappointed and digestive system shocked pet. If you have been feeding your pet commercial grain and starch-based food, your pet's digestive track has been compromised and you want to begin by supporting the building up of its natural ability to handle raw animal protein and bones. The following guidelines will help you easily transition your companion animal to a healthy raw diet.

First and foremost, get your pet off of dry dog or cat food (Kibble): Moisture in your pet's food is essential to their digestive process.

Stop the free-feeding practice: Feed your pet two to three times a day (adults) or three to four times a day: kittens, puppies, pregnant or nursing females.

Supporting your pet's digestion during the transition with probiotics and digestive enzymes is beneficial. [See information below](#)

Transition your companion animal from a grain/starch-based dry or canned food to a *cooked* animal protein diet. NEVER mix raw food with dry kibble or grain-based foods: If you are feeding any grain and/or starch-based pet food (dry or canned), we strongly recommend that you first convert your companion animal to a high quality **grain and starch free** cooked animal protein diet. These *moist* animal protein foods should include 7% to 10% cooked organ meat and a very small amount of select pureed vegetables are optional, but **NO GRAINS, STARCHES, OR STARCHY VEGETABLES** (i.e. sweet potatoes, yellow squash, peas, etc.). This conversion is usually a welcome change for your pet and can be done over 5 days to a week by adding a little more each day of the cooked *animal protein* food (See **Recipe**) into their dry kibble or canned grain/starch-based food. The following is a guide:

Transition your pet from dry-kibble or canned (with grains/starch) to a moist cooked animal protein diet (homemade or canned):

Days 1-3	¾ existing food	¼ moist cooked animal protein
Days 4-5	½ existing food	½ moist cooked animal protein
Days 6-7	¼ existing food	¾ moist cooked animal protein
Day 8 and on	all moist cooked animal protein	

NOTE: For the Cooked Proteins –

Do not cook or microwave the *Carnivores* whole-prey meat-bone-organ products or *any* product containing bone or cartilage, and

Do not feed meats that contain tenderizers, flavoring or preservatives

Many grocery stores carry brands of meats, (especially poultry), that have been injected with up to 12% artificial ingredients. These additives cause many pets to experience allergic reactions such as itching and chewing. Read the label.

Once converted from dry kibble or canned with grain/starch, maintain this 100% animal protein moist diet for 4 to 5 days.

Once you have converted your pet to a completely no grain, no starch diet you have two choices:

1. make the switch immediately to a *ground* raw food meal; or
2. make the transition gradually over a period of 10 to 12 days (Our recommendation is a gradual transition)

To introduce raw meats and raw bones, we recommend starting out with only bones that are ground into the meats.

Our *Carnivores* Line of Products makes raw feeding easy: with muscle meat, organ and bone ground together in nature's *whole-prey* proportions and packaged in convenient 1 lb chub bags.

Follow a similar gradual approach: If you elect to convert slowly, add a little more ground raw food to the cooked *animal protein only* meal each day. Start with just a spoonful and work up to ¼, then ½ of the serving and then ¾ of the serving and so on, until your pet is eating a completely raw diet. This can be accomplished within two weeks. Again, watch your pet. If he or she is having trouble with digestive upset go slower. The following is a guide:

Transition from moist cooked animal protein diet to *Carnivores* ground raw animal protein diet:

Days 1-2	add a small amount of raw animal protein to existing cooked animal protein (about 1/8 th of meal raw the other 7/8 th portion cooked protein).	
Days 2-4	¾ cooked animal protein	¼ raw animal protein
Days 5-8	½ cooked animal protein	½ raw animal protein

Days 9-12 ¼ cooked animal protein ¾ raw animal protein
Day 13 on all raw animal protein diet

Note: It is recommended to start with one protein source for the first few days. **Beef Tripe** is a good first food choice when you begin the transition to a raw diet because it has an irresistible smell (to pets, not so much to humans) and is full of enzymes and good bacteria. Tripe can also be added in a small quantity to a ground whole-prey meal for its digestive support benefits. Tripe and whole-prey ground **Rabbit** are good early transition choices. After a week or so, begin to offer your companion animal other protein sources for a variety of meals. See **Weekly Raw Diet Schedule**.

Most pets take to raw with a natural zest for it. If your pet is tolerating the transition and eager for more raw food, you can expedite the process by shortening the number of days in each period. If they are finicky and reluctant to eat the raw food add a *spoonful* of something with an aroma to entice them to eat. (Like when we put cheese on broccoli so our kids will eat what's good for them.) Some suggestions are to mix in a spoonful of raw Tripe or cooked meat - (slightly sautéed in first-cold-pressed olive oil with a pinch of fresh chopped garlic- [for dogs, no garlic for cats] and sea salt) or canned tuna or sardines. **Toppers** are also an excellent choice for this purpose.

Support Your Pet's Digestive Function from start to finish of the transition: When you *begin* the transition to raw food, we suggest supporting your pet's digestive track with digestive enzymes and probiotics (the good bacteria). Your pet's digestive system has been compromised from eating biologically inappropriate foods and it helps to give their digestive tract a boost.

Chlorella is a highly beneficial food with an array of health building properties. Among its many benefits is that it enhances digestion, helps the good bacteria in the gut to thrive, and binds heavy metals and toxins; sweeping them out of the body. In addition, once you begin to transition your pet from the cooked animal protein diet to a raw animal protein diet, adding *raw Green Tripe* and **Pancreas** will also assist their digestion (good intestinal bacteria and digestive enzyme benefit). Raw Green Tripe can be added to the meals at about ¼ Tripe to ¾ raw meat-bone-organs. Raw Pancreas can be added to the raw meat-bone-organs in a quantity of ½ tsp. raw Pancreas to 1 ounce raw meat-bone-organ or about 1½ tbs of raw Pancreas per pound of raw meat-bone-organ.

There are *allergen-free* probiotics and suitable *animal* derived digestive enzyme supplements on the market. However, many dogs and cats are sensitive to dairy and we have not found a probiotic on the market that does not potentially contain milk derivatives, and most digestive enzymes can cause burning of the mouth when sprinkled on food. We believe the best source of supplementation is with whole foods and **Chlorella**, raw **Green Tripe** and **Pancreas** seem to work just fine for most pets.

Continue with the daily addition of **Green Tripe** and a small amount of **Pancreas** for a week or two after you have completely converted your pet to a raw diet. At this point the pancreatic enzymes and beneficial intestinal bacteria

will have improved their digestion and your pet should be accustomed to its new nutrient-rich whole food raw diet. Chlorella, Green Tripe and Pancreas supply beneficial nutrients to your companion animal so include them in their weekly diet ongoing. We feed two Tripe meals a week and a small amount of Pancreas added to a meat meal 2 to 3 times a week. We also give our pets **Chlorella** daily. **See Weekly Raw Diet Schedule**

Older pets or cats that refuse to eat Green Tripe, and especially pets with chronic digestive issues may benefit from supplementation of an allergen-free Probiotic, but try the **Chlorella** because it can assist with these issues and more! Dogs and cats with pancreatic issues and aging pets will benefit from the daily continuation of raw **Pancreas**.

Do Not Transition to a Raw Diet by Adding Raw Food to Kibble or a Grain-Based Food: Some people say to transition a dog or cat to raw foods by adding it to their existing diet of dry kibble or canned grain/starchy food. We do not agree with this transition method of adding raw food to ANY dry kibble or grain or starchy foods. This comes from uninformed-early personal experience with our dog developing bouts of colitis as a result of mixing grains with raw meats. Over the years we have seen many pets develop digestive distress (diarrhea, vomiting, etc.) because their humans unknowingly mixed the raw food with dry kibble or grain/starch-based foods.

Remember, grains are meant for the omnivore and the herbivore, not the carnivore. The carnivore is intentionally designed with a short foregut and a short smooth colon. The species appropriate raw meats, bone, fat and grizzle are meant to move quickly through your dog's and cat's digestive tract. If you mix dry kibble or grains and starches- (which take a long time to digest) with raw meat and bone - this food combination can remain in the gut and the intestine much longer than they were intended. In our experience, this can cause your companion animal to suffer digestive upset including diarrhea and colitis. These starchy foods also interfere with the uptake of vital nutrients.

Allergies to a specific meat source: Dogs and cats that are fed a single processed meat protein source for years have been known to develop an allergy to that particular meat protein (i.e. usually chicken or beef). Lamb eventually became known as a hypoallergenic meat because lamb was not generally fed to pets on a daily basis. It is said that pets that are switched from a popular processed meat to a processed lamb pet food and fed only lamb may eventually also develop an allergy to lamb.

If you think your pet is allergic to specific meat sources you can:

- Avoid that raw meat source; or
- Feed the suspected source of raw meat exclusively and see if they tolerate that meat source in its raw natural state; or
- After your pet is converted to a raw meat diet of all *other* (tolerated) meat sources for a month or so, add the raw meat source of allergy concern to the diet and see if they tolerate it.

Sometimes it is not the meat source that is the problem. Other ingredients in the food, treats or supplements you have been feeding may be the culprit. One example of hidden potential allergens is that processed pet food manufacturers may utilize poultry meats that have added flavor enhancers or tenderizers. Other allergens that may be found in processed foods include soy, wheat, corn and MSG, (or corn and MSG derivatives listed as unnoticeable names), flaxseed, chemical preservatives, etc. Most pets are sensitive to these ingredients and additives and display allergy symptoms such as ear problems, eye drainage, and obsessive licking, chewing and scratching. Many dogs and cats with chronic allergies recover from allergy symptoms when they are provided with a species appropriate raw diet.

Variety is important; so if you discover that your pet can indeed tolerate all raw meat sources, it is great to have no limit on the array of animal protein sources you can offer your pet on a weekly basis.

Whether you take a gradual or immediate transition to a raw diet

KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON YOUR PET: Watch for any digestive upset (diarrhea is not uncommon and vomiting may occur). This is said to be part of the detoxifying process when the animal is finally provided with clean nutritious food. The key is to be aware. A bout of diarrhea or a little vomit is not too concerning, but if these symptoms continue dehydration is a serious concern. If your pet is having trouble, back off and go slower. In addition, a small amount of 100% pure pumpkin can be given as a treat to alleviate loose stools. Your pet will adjust; some pets just take longer than others to become accustomed to the change from a processed food regiment to a healthy raw whole food diet.

Most dogs and cats are eager to eat the raw food. They are usually very excited about being offered real food with active nutrients and living enzymes. Some cats, however, are more difficult to convert to a raw diet. Cats that have been fed dry kibble also known as “kibble-crack” because of its addictive qualities can be especially difficult to convert. Cats are also much more sensitive to food texture changes than dogs are.

Again, if you have a finicky feline or canine we suggest adding a little cooked food as a “**Topper**” to entice your pet to begin eating the raw food. Toppers are homemade chicken, beef, or lamb stews. A little Tripe, tuna, or sardines can also be used to get them interested and entice them to eat the raw meal.

Toppers can also be used as a meal for the early stage transition from dry kibble and grain/starchy food to cooked animal protein foods. See **Topper Recipe**

It is *important* that a cat does not go without eating for any length of time: Cats do not have a great amount of body mass and it can cause serious health issues for a cat to lose weight rapidly. Teacup dogs should also not go without food for more than a day.

Print this Report

The following links will provide good insight on raw diets and how to convert the stubborn cat to a healthy, nutritious raw diet:

Feline Nutrition Education Society
<http://feline-nutrition.org/nutrition>

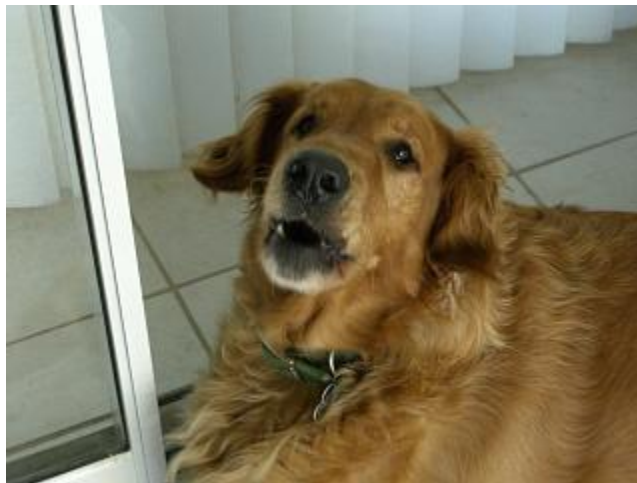
Transitioning Feline Dry Food Addicts to Canned Food, Dr. Lisa Pierson,
catinfo.org

How to Win the Healthy Food Battle with Your Fussy Feline... Dr. Karen Becker
<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2010/03/10/how-to-transition-your-cat-to-raw-food-diet-part-1.aspx>

Your Diabetic Cat, by Dr. Elizabeth Hodgkins,
<http://yourdiabeticcat.com/diet.html>

The carnivore connection to nutrition in cats, by Debra L. Zoran, DVM, PhD, DACVIM http://www.catinfo.org/docs/zorans_article.pdf

Remember: During the transition process, pay attention to your animal companion's health and well being - weight, energy level, skin condition, odor, coat quality, stool consistency and frequency, and oral health.



Murphy says *"What are you waiting for... let's get started today!"*

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your own research and your personal knowledge concerning your pet. If you use the information on this website to make decisions for your pet's health or your own health, Grateful Pet assumes no responsibility for such decisions. We provide insight, high quality food, supplements, and gentle remedies and recommend seeking advice from a qualified, nutritionally oriented health care provider who has thoroughly researched your pet's health.