

What about . . . THE B.A.R.F. DIET?

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"You can boost your pet's health profoundly by making one simple decision. All you have to do is to change his diet from unhealthy, commercial-brand fare to something you many have never imagined giving him: real food!"

Martin Goldstein, DVM [The Nature of Animal Healing](#)

For those who do not know, B.A.R.F. is actually the official acronym for **Biologically Appropriate Raw/Real Food** or, unofficially, Bones And Raw Food developed by Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst, B.V.Sc., author of [Give Your Dog A Bone](#) [www.barfworld.com], after studying wild canid diets. It is, in actuality, an evolutionary diet, a natural diet, a species appropriate diet.

Dogs are by nature *omnivores* with a *carnivorous* background (cats are *obligate carnivores*). With wild canines and larger *herbivorous* prey animals, they will eat the stomach contents consisting of partially digested grasses, herbs, shrubs, fruits, etc. along with the stomach itself, tripe, which is simply loaded with beneficial enzymes and nutrients. They then will go to the organs and muscles. In fact, frequently the hindquarters, a large muscle mass, will be buried to "ripen" a bit before being consumed. Smaller prey is pretty much eaten whole.

Frequently they will eat berries and some grasses, but generally these are more for cleansing, or if nothing else has come to paw, rather than full nutrition.

Because of these natural habits, and the fact that they possess the short, highly acidic G.I. tract of a carnivore, the dog's digestive and immune systems are specifically designed to deal with all manners of bacteria. Dogs fed on raw meat diets have far fewer parasites than those eating standard supermarket dog foods and their teeth remain sparkling white. After all, have you ever seen a wolf with tooth brush?

Variations of the diet have been fed successfully to all manner of dogs/puppies from Maltese to Mastiffs, from Pekinese to Pyrenees and everything in between.

It is also a superior feeding program for cats or any other carnivorous animal you may be tending including ferrets and big cats.

Two incredible benefits of a raw meat diet is that stools become smaller with little odor which indi-

cates that full digestion is taking place. This could prove quite beneficial to homes with both children and dogs, and also for kennels.

The second great benefit is no tartar! That's right—say good-bye to brushing your dog's teeth or taking it to the vet for a thorough cleaning. It is the starch in kibbled food that leads to tartar build-up and because there is no grain in raw food diets, then no tartar can form. After all, have you ever seen a wolf with a toothbrush?

Most dogs do not require large amounts of raw meat. The general recommendation for portions is 2-4% of your dog's body weight per day depending on activity level while puppies require 6%. Feel your dogs frequently: good flesh for both dogs and puppies is slightly lean with only about 1/8" of fat over their bones. You may also find a few months after you beginning this diet, that your dogs can begin to require less food as they catch up nutritionally; in fact, they may even refuse a meal occasionally.

Once a week, "fast" your adult dogs; after all, their wild brothers don't eat everyday, more like once every 2 or 3 days. In fact, they may fast themselves. On such fast days give them just a "recreational" bone (marrow bones cut into small pieces for smaller dogs or in slightly longer pieces with ends left on for larger dogs; knuckle bones, etc.) and always, pure, fresh water. Puppies can miss one meal per day.

All meats on a raw diet should be strictly from chemical-free animals, preferably grass-fed/finished; any vegetables should be organically grown, free from pesticides, waxes, etc. and either pulped (ground very fine or whizzed in a blender) or lightly steamed to break down cellular walls for canine digestive systems.

Raw, whole eggs are a natural food for canines, especially the game birds' eggs. However, any range-free eggs will do. Ideally eggs are fed whole (crush and include the shell) and raw as they would eat them naturally. There is *avidin* in the raw egg white which can bind up *biotin*, but since the yolk is loaded with *biotin*, it becomes a non-issue despite what you may have heard to the contrary. The only possible imbalance would be if the whites

only were fed for a long time. Cooked eggs do not provide anywhere near the same nutrient values.

Dairy is *not* an essential part of the diet, but many dogs enjoy it, so a little can be added occasionally for variety if you wish. Any dairy should be from grass fed dairy cows and raw if at all possible. Plain whole-fat yogurt and cottage cheese are good with bits of pure, whole cheeses used as training treats, etc. Many dogs have problems digesting cows' milk, but will do fine on goats milk. If you can get it, real fermented kefir [<http://users.chariot.net.au/%7Edna/kefirpage.html>] has a better profile of beneficial bacteria cultures than yogurt and is excellent for the digestive tract.

Some people have found that making stews (from bones, meat and veggies) and omelet's (eggs and veggies) for their dogs suits them better than the raw BARF feeding. Martin Goldstein, DVM, [The Nature of Animal Healing](#), seems to enjoy cooking for his dogs and has had excellent success with such cooked diets in numerous cases. However, if you choose this method, dogs will still need some raw, meaty bones for the enzyme and chewing factors. An occasional can of wild salmon along with some canned pumpkin can also suffice in a pinch.

We ourselves prefer the AFS (Animal Food Service, www.animalfood.com, 800-743-0322) company which offers frozen 5# rolls bulk, 5# rolls frozen patties and freeze-dried patties which are excellent for those who choose not to handle raw meat or superb for use in hiking or vacation situations. The lack of veggies in this food actually appeals to us as we believe most canines do not require such a high percentage of veggies as BARF recommends and we enjoy giving our dogs our vegetable "leftovers." In fact, many people like to give fruits and vegetables to their dogs as safe and healthful treats.

Regardless of which you choose, be sure to include **Herbal Green** for that extra "green" boost and, if you are feeding cooked food, then the addition of **DynaPro** and **Showdown** are also highly recommended. Puppies of large and giant breeds (and geriatrics) could also benefit from some **Free & Easy** for joints. Ideally, use **Catalyst Water** for all water use or at least, filtered water. PS. This diet is great for cats and other carnivores, too! ■

The Official B.A.R.F. Diet

as developed by Ian Billinghurst, B.V.Sc.
www.barfworld.com

- ✓ 60% raw meaty bones such as chicken wings/backs or chicken/turkey necks which can be eaten whole for teeth and jaws or ground for geriatrics with few teeth. Whole rabbit, duck, pheasant and quail are also suggested when available and if the human can deal with them! Mercury-free whole fish are also suggested about once per week or some fish oil.
- ✓ 10% muscle meat (beef, game, poultry, lamb, goat, etc; heart, tongue and unbleached/"green" tripe are considered muscular rather than organ)
- ✓ 10% organ meats (raw tripe, liver, kidney, etc.)
- ✓ 20% pulped/lightly steamed vegetables with a touch of raw fruit: especially dark leafy greens: romaine lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, beet greens, turnip greens, collards, parsley, cilantro, dandelion, etc. plus carrots, yams, sweet potatoes, yellow squash, beets; use vegetable trimmings also, some garlic but no onion; the best fruits are ripe to over-ripe raw berries, with some apples, pears, etc., and should be fed separate from the other foods as they digest faster.

Getting together all the ingredients on an individual homeowner's basis can sometimes be a bit daunting although meats and bones can usually be purchased from your local health food store or even meat plant. If you feed tripe, make sure it is raw or "green" rather than processed—raw tripe does have an odor that is unmistakable! Make sure all meat is chemical-free, organically grown, or, ideally, free-range grown.

Many individuals grind the muscle and organ meats together fifty-fifty with vegetables to form patties which can be made ahead and frozen individually for ease of use. These then are fed at one meal while the raw, meaty bones are fed at another meal.

Bone appetit!