



# How To Switch Your Dog To A Raw Dog Food Diet: A Guide

Switching your pooch to raw dog food can positively affect your pet's health. Pet Parlour shares their tips on how to switch your dog to a raw diet.

## How To Transition Your Dog To A Raw Dog Food Diet

So you have made the best decision to transition your dog to a ["species appropriate"](#) [raw](#) diet. You need a pat on the back! Dogs evolved to eat raw meat, bone and offal and some partially digested plant matter. Your dog will be much happier and



healthier and possibly experience a lot less visits to the vet.

One of the many reasons that raw feeding is growing so quickly here in Ireland and around the world for that matter, is that owners who raw feed are seeing huge difference in their dogs health and wellbeing. Not only do their dogs change smell, (yes a dog that eats a raw diet smells completely different to a dog eating kibble) but their coats are shiner, their skin is healthy and dogs who eat a raw diet have fewer dental problems than dry fed dogs as raw meat does not stick to their teeth like kibble does. Just try to imagine what your teeth would feel like after chewing on a mouthful of your Dogs nuts!

The myth of kibble cleaning a dog's teeth is just that, a myth. Would you give a child a digestive biscuit just before bedtime and think they had clean teeth?!

Depending on the age of your dog and any health problems it is sensible to spend a week or so making the transition. Some dogs can change their diet overnight and have no issues, whereas others may experience some detoxification depending on the diet they have eaten previously and of course, for how long.

In this case, think about how you would feel if you had eaten highly processed foods for months and you suddenly switched to salads, fresh meats, vegetables and a lot less sugar. You may not feel great to start with but this would change over time and your energy levels would drastically improve.

Dogs digest raw food differently to processed food which is why it is important to make the change from processed to fresh food slowly. For example, dry food swells in the gut, whereas raw food doesn't.

Most raw dog foods have no fillers or any unnecessary carbohydrates which your dog does not require for good health or condition.

Here are some tips to help transition your dog to a raw diet



1. Transition should ideally be gradual. Try adding some raw food to your dog's current bowl of food and see how your dog reacts to it. Just a tablespoon at a time for a large dog and a teaspoon for a small dog.
2. Add an extra spoon of raw food in each meal, while reducing the dry food, until it is completely raw.
3. Try adding a raw egg as an addition too as they are great for dogs, full of protein and most dogs love eggs. 2-4 eggs per week.
4. Adding some lightly cooked leafy green veg can help if the raw diet does not have some in it. Some dogs will and some dogs won't eat veg but most will, especially if it's mixed into the meat mix in smaller pieces. These vegetables (especially the leafy green variety like spinach or kale) can help to manipulate the fat and protein content of the diet and also adds some great vitamins and minerals. Lightly steaming is better if possible as boiling removes some of the valuable nutritional content. Maybe a quick flick in the blender too if necessary. Avoid microwaves as they kill all nutrient values in food.
5. Adding some in season fruit such as blackberries which are abundant at the moment, is another great way of adding extra nutritional value to your dogs diet and most dogs enjoy blackberries.
6. You may want to get some Psyllium husk or [Stoolrite](#) if necessary. These natural fibre supplements can be really helpful when making the change. It helps with dogs who may experience diarrhoea or constipation. Just a sprinkle on their food for a few weeks until they are completely transitioned to raw. Most dogs transition without the need for this but as previously mentioned, they are worth a considering if your dog is prone to bouts or runny poop!
7. Occasionally some dogs may need some digestive enzymes, to help digest raw food if you think they might be struggling or have dicky stomachs



8. We know that raw bones should never be cooked but if your dog is particularly fussy or wary of the new food, flash frying a complete mince is safe and brings out the delicious new smells which may help tempt your dog to eat the new food.
9. Adding a few sprinkles of fish skins or liver treats is also a great way to tempt fussy eater to try new foods.
10. Don't be concerned if your dog drinks less water. Raw food is approximately 70% water naturally (not added) so your dog is getting hydration from the raw food. Many people worry about this as a dry fed dog drinks a lot of water for obvious reasons.
11. You may be surprised about the amount of poop you will pick up! It is about a quarter of what you will be used to (when the change to raw food is complete). This is because there are very little carbohydrates in raw food which dogs do not need as they get their energy from the fat and protein in meat.

Raw feeding people constantly talk about poop – sorry! It really is a great fact that what comes out of the other end of your dog is so much smaller and does not smell anywhere near as bad as highly processed diets do, we promise. Picking up poo becomes totally different experience and not nearly as unpleasant as before!

Do keep an eye out for white poop as this may indicate the bone content is a little high for your dog. Overly black poop may indicate the offal content is a little high. Every dog is different and reacts to changes in their diet just as we would, so just check there are no changes that give you any concern. In general, poop should be coloured from light brown to dark brown.



## Transitioning your dog to raw food and hygiene.

This is highly spoken about subject and can be very controversial. As we know a dog's digestive system is designed to eat raw meat and bones. Think about a lion or a hyena in the wild and how they eat and survive on a diet that is certainly not processed! The acids in a dog's stomach are so strong they would burn your finger if touched, so they are well able to deal with raw meat.

Applying sensible hygiene is really important, the same rules as when handling any meat products you use for your family, like stuffing a chicken for your Sunday dinner. Interestingly, there are more recalls from dry diets regarding hygiene than raw diets as people who feed a dry diet are less likely to wash the dog bowl and regularly grab a handful of dry nuts without deploying proper hygiene protocols.

- Keep raw meat in a sealed Tupperware tubs in the bottom of the fridge.
- Stainless steel or ceramic bowls are the safest to use with raw food as plastic bowls can scratch and this can increase bacteria growing in the crevices.
- Defrost the raw food in the fridge or leave in a cool place to defrost (this can take up to 24 hours).
- Raw food kept in the fridge lasts for between 2-3 days, like regular human meats.
- When you handle raw meat, wash your hands thoroughly with warm soapy water.
- When your dog has finished eating, wash the bowl with warm soapy water and rinse well or put in the dishwasher.
- Clean any surfaces with warm soapy water to remove any bacteria.



Thanks for reading folks.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further information regarding raw feeding your dog or cat.

If you are planning to switch your dog or cat to a raw food diet please get in touch here – [info@petparlour.ie](mailto:info@petparlour.ie) . We will set you up with a free phone, or in-person consultation with one of our experts.