



Pets and Raw-Protein Diets: *10 Facts You Should Know*

Before they were domesticated and became “man’s best friend,” dogs ate raw meat, bones, and other scraps they were able to scavenge. Today, despite potential health concerns cited by public health and veterinary organizations, some pet owners prefer to feed their pets a raw-protein diet.

If you’re considering feeding your pet a raw-protein diet, it’s important that you know all the facts and take precautions to keep your family—human and animal—safe.

Here are 10 facts to consider before going raw:

1

In studies, more than 20% of commercially available raw-protein diets for dogs tested positive for *Salmonella spp.*¹

2

Studies on bacterial contamination of raw foods in grocery stores found that 4 to 39% of raw poultry contained either *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, or both.²

3

Up to 30% of dogs who are fed raw-protein diets may shed pathogenic organisms in their stool, which contaminates the environment and poses health risks to humans and other animals.³

4

Raw-protein diets have also tested positive for *Escherichia coli* and *Campylobacter spp.*⁴

5

Healthy pets may not show signs of illness when they have ingested these bacteria.⁵

6

Parasites have also been found in raw meat-based meals for pets, including *Sarcocystis spp.*, and *Toxoplasma gondi.*¹

7

Pets and humans who are immunocompromised, very young, or very old are at significant risk. ⁶

8

Many of the pathogens found in raw-protein diets can be transmitted to humans by contact with the food itself, the pet, the pet's feces, or environmental surfaces. ⁷

9

Anyone preparing a raw-protein diet for a pet should practice proper hand washing and ensure that all utensils, bowls, and surfaces used for preparation are properly cleaned and disinfected. ⁸

10

Due to the risks noted above, the American Animal Hospital Association⁹, American Veterinary Medical Association¹⁰, U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine¹¹, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹² do not recommend feeding raw protein diets to pets.

Know the facts and take the proper precautions before feeding raw protein to your pets.

References

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¹¹ U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). "Get the Facts! Raw Pet Food Diets Can Be Dangerous to You and Your Pet." Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/resourcesforyou/animalhealthliteracy/ucm373757.htm>.

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