



# MYTH OR FACT?



**A raw food diet is the most natural and, therefore, the best diet for cats and dogs.**

## IT'S A MYTH

Many pet owners think feeding their dogs and cats food that mimics the raw diet of wild animals is the right thing to do.

## THE FACTS

### Raw diets may contain bacteria.

- Raw meat and poultry may be contaminated with harmful microorganisms, such as salmonella.<sup>1</sup>
- Feeding raw meat to pets can expose them to bacteria, parasites and protozoa.

### Preparing and feeding a raw diet can also expose your family to harmful organisms.

- Members of the household will also be exposed to the same bacteria, protozoa and parasites when you feed a diet containing raw meat to a cat or dog.
- These microorganisms pose greater risk to the young, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

### Salmonella Contamination



*Salmonella was found in raw diets and fecal samples from dogs fed raw diets.<sup>2</sup> This poses a threat to members of the household.*

### Bones as part of a raw diet can be hazardous to pets' health.

- Raw (and cooked) bones can fracture teeth.
- Jagged or sharp points can tear the esophagus, stomach or intestines.
- Fragments of bone may become lodged in gastrointestinal tract.

### Raw diets may not be nutritionally balanced or complete.

- Diets made of mostly meat or poultry and bones may be lacking in important nutrients.
- Calcium deficiency is a common problem with these diets, which can lead to impaired growth, spontaneous fractures and loose teeth.
- Vitamin A toxicity can occur if large amounts of raw liver are fed.

## REMEMBER

A raw food diet may not be the best choice for your pet. This type of food can expose your pet and your family to harmful microorganisms, physically injure your pet and lead to nutritional imbalances.

1. Schlesinger DP, Joffe DJ. Raw food diets in companion animals: A critical review. *Can Vet J.* 2011;52(1):50-54.  
 2. Joffe DJ, Schlesinger DP. Preliminary assessment of the risk of Salmonella infection in dogs fed raw chicken diets. *Can Vet J.* 2002;43:441-442.