

The Benefits Of Raw Foods

By Brian Puterman

Cooking food diminishes some of the naturally occurring vitamins and enzymes found in meats, grains and produce. Uncooked food, especially meat and vegetables, are packed with enzymes; so much so that these enzymes actually help break down the food they're in, aiding a healthy digestive process.

Between 1932 and 1942 Dr. Francis M. Pottenger did a study on the difference between animals consuming raw and cooked foods. The results of this study were that the animals that ate a balanced diet of cooked food had a weakened immune system that was passed on to their young. It was further discovered that after three generations the immune system of the animal's offspring was virtually non-existent. The studies also showed that if these animals were given a raw food diet, their immune system would improve and after three generations of raw foods returned to normal.

The idea of our pets consuming raw fruits and vegetables isn't hard to imagine but if we think of meats, fish and poultry it would appear that there might be some risk of bacteria or parasites. A healthy dog or cat should have enough acid in the stomach to safely kill pathogenic bacteria. Raw pork is not recommended because of parasites. Most animals prefer beef, chicken, turkey or rabbit as a protein source.

Dogs and cats were once feral animals. They hunted and ate their prey without the benefits of cooking. Of course over the centuries with the domestication of these animals their digestive systems have adapted to their more controlled environment, but the fact remains they are still carnivores. Still, the evidence suggests that a raw food diet would be the healthiest way to care for your pets.

Many holistic veterinarians recommend both raw meat and fish to serve as a preventive measure against degenerative diseases like cancer.

Some of the raw vegetables your pet would benefit from are alfalfa sprouts, zucchini, asparagus, carrots and lettuce. Some fruits to try are peaches, plums and bananas.

Dairy products are best when used sparsely. Eggs, organic cheese (avoid soft cheeses that have too much cream in them), cottage cheese and yogurt can all be used in moderation. Since cow's milk is meant to turn a calf into a full-grown cow, it contains natural growth hormones and proteins that can adversely affect your pet. Tap water is as bad for pets as it is for you.

To almost any dish you can add garlic. Besides being a natural flea repellent, pets usually love it. Pasta with pesto is a healthy dish to serve your dog or cat. Your pet may enjoy potatoes, lamb and broccoli in sunflower oil...with a little cheese sprinkled on top. Brown rice, chicken and vegetables may also make a decent meal.

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