

Grocery Store Raw

by Chelsea Kent

A dog's and cat's saliva contain high levels of chitan-based barriers and the enzyme Lysozyme. Lysozyme is known to attack the cell walls of many gram-positive bacteria, aiding in defense against infection. Saliva also contains antibacterial and antiviral enzymes such as peroxidase, defensins, cystatins, IgA, thrombospondin, protease inhibitors, and nitrates. (1)

Food borne bacteria include Salmonella, Campylobacter, Shigella, E.Coli, Listeria, Vibrio, and Clostridium. (2) Many pets and people on primarily processed diets are deficient in these (and other) enzymes making them more susceptible to illness. (4) Humans inability to naturally, effectively neutralize bacterial pathogens is the primary reason for pet food recalls, not necessarily because pets get sick. People tend to have good handling practices with their own food preparation/handling but sometimes forget that pet food requires the same treatment.

So why, if raw foods designed for pets rarely contain pathogens, do vets not support and even claim raw diets cause pets to get deathly ill? Salmonella and E.Coli are most commonly found on human foods (beef, poultry, milk, eggs) that are un/undercooked, or poorly handled, feces, reptiles, fowl, turtles and rodents. (3) Pathogens are ubiquitous in the environment and pets use their tongues as washcloths, toilet paper, environmental research, and for communication. And of course, immune compromised or recently vaccinated pets are more likely to get sick from pathogens and the environment. Sometimes coincidence plays a role in illness and generally when the body has an opportunity to detox after a long duration on exclusively processed foods it will "purge" what it thinks it doesn't need anymore, leading sometimes to diarrhea and even vomiting.

It is completely reasonable to assume that some pets get sick from raw grocery store meats, or if they are immune compromised or transitioned improperly. There are few regulations on grocery store meats because the FDA knows that when grocery meats are properly cooked pathogens are rendered harmless. The FDA maintains a zero-tolerance policy on raw foods for pets, though, because it is intended to be fed raw. Also, home-cooked diets exclusive of bone, muscle meat, and APPROPRIATE fruits and veggies cause deficiencies/toxicities in vitamins, minerals, amino acids, etc. Imbalances can lead to the manifestation of many illnesses.

Ultimately, there are so many inexpensive (comparatively), convenient and well-regulated raw and dehydrated raw options on the market today, it's better to feed a prepared raw diet from a reputable company then it is to purchase grocery store meats and feed them raw.

Sources:

- 1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wound_licking
- 2) <http://www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/bacteria/>
- 3) <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/food-poisoning/tc/salmonellosis-topic-overview>
- 4) <http://www.enzymestuff.com/faq.htm>

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