

Why Organ Meat Is Important For The Raw Fed Dog

by Dogs Naturally on January 30, 2012



Last week, we had to turn back an article that a veterinarian had submitted to us about raw feeding. We turned it away for a variety of reasons but one of the reasons was the first impression we had of the author and the content. The article started with something to the effect of, “There is nothing more dangerous than a poorly prepared raw diet.” While we don’t disagree that dietary imbalances can cause health issues in dogs, the fact remains that nearly 10,000 dogs were killed by contaminated kibble in 2007. In the face of this, it’s a pretty bold statement to say that nothing is more

dangerous than a poorly prepared raw diet.

Raw feeders do have to be careful with what goes into their dogs however. I think this is especially true for prey model feeders as omitting all plant matter from their dogs’ diets could potentially set them up for some nutritional deficiencies. Unless they feed a good amount of organ meats.

Meat and bone are lacking in many important nutrients. This is why it is important to to feed your dog all of the organs and all of the parts of an animal that they would eat had they tracked and killed that animal in the wild. Although some organ meats can be difficult to find, they are the most nutrient-dense part of the animal. Best of all, because organ meats are relatively inexpensive, they give you the most bang for your raw feeding buck.

Compared to regular cuts of muscle meat, organ meats are more densely packed with just about every nutrient, including heavy doses of B vitamins such as: B1, B2, B6, folic acid and vitamin B12.

Organ meats are also loaded with minerals like phosphorus, iron, copper, magnesium and iodine, and provide the important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. It is important to note that animals raised outside on grass contain even higher levels of these essential nutrients than their grain-fed counterparts.

Try all of the organ meats, including lung, kidney, pancreas – anything you can get your hands on! Here is a look at the benefits of the most common organ meats: liver and heart.

A Natural source of Vitamin D

Vitamin D is one of the most important vitamins (actually a hormone precursor) and regulates numerous functions in the body. Vitamin D deficiency is related to muscle weakness, fractures, common cancers, autoimmune diseases and infectious diseases. It’s especially

important for those who live at higher latitudes and receive less sun (since sun exposure is the best source of Vitamin D).

Organ meats are known to have some of the highest concentrations of naturally occurring vitamin D of any food source, and including a source of organ meats into your dog's diet once or twice a week, can especially in the winter time when vitamin D deficiency is most likely to happen.

Organ meats also contain high amounts of the essential fatty acids such as arachidonic acid, and omega-3 fats, including EPA and DHA. Despite popular belief, fish and fish oils are not the only source of the important EPA and DHA... organ meats are loaded with these important nutrients.

If your dog doesn't like the taste or texture of organ meat, you can add smaller amounts of ground organ meats to your dog's meals daily.

What about liver?

People usually ask about the safety of liver in particular of all of the organ meats. It is the liver's job to neutralize toxins in the body (or an animals body) from drugs or other chemicals, so obviously the best choice for liver is the grass fed kind, without added antibiotics or hormones.

Liver is known to be one of the most concentrated sources of natural vitamin A of any food. Natural vitamin A works to aid digestion, keeps sex organs/reproductive organs healthy, and is a powerful antioxidant.

Liver is a great source of folic Acid, B vitamins and especially vitamin B12, which help with fatigue, mental ability and nerve health, as well as preventing anemia.

Liver also contains one of the best, most usable sources for the body, of iron. Iron is necessary for many functions in the body including formation of hemoglobin, brain development and function, regulation of body temperature, muscle activity and catecholamine metabolism, to name just a few. A lack of iron will have a direct effect on the immune system; it diminishes the number of T- cells and the production of antibodies.

Iron is essential to oxygen to the blood cells. The primary function of iron is oxygen transport and cell respiration. For an anemic person, fatigue is one of the most noticeable symptoms. The iron in liver is one of most easily absorbable and usable sources of iron.

Do you have a performance dog? Liver contains an anti-fatigue factor, which is likely to do with improving the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood cells; increasing endurance and strength in athletes of all species.

Liver contains many nitrogen-containing compounds that are building blocks for DNA and RNA. In combination with the B vitamins, this makes it extremely helpful to people with Alzheimers or other types of dementia.

While liver is highly nutritious, its precious nutrients are very much affected by heat, so never cook it or the digestive enzymes and nutrients will be lost.

Get liver into your dog's regular diet at least once a week if possible for maximum benefit of its high levels of nutrients.

Beef heart

Because it is a muscle, beef heart is somewhat similar to muscle meat, although it is a heavier, more dense muscle. But heart meat carries a bigger punch of protein and unique nutrients.

The heart is a very concentrated source of the supernutrient, CoQ10.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is necessary for the basic functioning of cells, as well as optimizing the heart's rhythm. CoQ10 levels are reported to decrease with age and to be lower in some patients with some chronic diseases such as heart conditions, cancer, diabetes, and immune disorders.

Beef heart also contains Selenium, Phosphorus & Zinc, along with essential amino acids that help build muscle, store energy and boost stamina and endurance. The heart also contains twice as much collagen and elastin than regular meat, which is good for the skin and connective tissue.