

Balanced meals for dogs! By Cindy Tarquinio

Even if you don't intend on making their food, this is still worth reading.

All About Balance Homemade Dog Meals

I want to start off by saying, I have thought about making my dog, Bella's food for a very long time. First there was all the hype about Raw Diet. It made a lot of sense to me, but as many of the resources mentions, it is not for every dog. Seeing how Bella has immune system issues I wanted to check with my vet to make sure I will not be harming her more than helping her. As I thought she would say, she recommended against it. But also like my resources stated the White Coats (conventional vets) most likely will not be onboard. To be on the safe side, I decided to hold off.

Until I decided the right course of action for Bella, I started researching canned dog food and found, my opinion, "Wellness/Wellness Core" to be the best and won me over. Bella loved it, so I ordered it on auto shipment from Chewy.com (if you are doing store bought food or even treats and accessories, I love this site.) But then I started reading articles on what actually goes into MOST commercial food, Kibble and Wet. I will go into that a little further down, but for now, trust me, it is disgusting! I also learned that "Premium" dog food legally can call it "Premium" and put the EXACT same ingredients (if you want to call it that) as the lower quality dog food and still call it "Premium"!

I reconsidered homemade dog food again. The difference this time was I had a lot more information on the subject. I invested in about 6 books based on dog nutrition. I have not even begun to scrape the surface but have uncovered enough to be able to share some of my new found knowledge to the smartest dog owners I know, YOU, because your reading this! :-)

So enough babbling, on with the awesome information for those of you that are ready to jump over to the home cooked side of the debate :-) I am going to start off this series of articles touching on cooked food rather than Raw.

Home cooking for your dog may not be the easiest or most convenient, but it is certainly the healthiest. Not only what I have mentioned previously about what goes into the commercial dog food, but there are recalls abound that have made dogs ill and even death. You don't have to worry about that with home cooked. You know exactly what is going into the food and you can add specific supplements that your dog needs. It is tailored to YOUR dog. The reason why so many vitamins and minerals are added to commercial foods is because it is cooked at such high temperatures that all the nutrients are cooked out of it! By home cooking, you get most of the vitamins and minerals that Teddy needs the healthiest way, in the actual food.

Also another very important issue is the quality of food in commercial vs. homemade. The food that you will be using will be purchased at a supermarket where you purchase your own food. Our food must abide by different laws. Our food must pass USDA inspection, Warehousing laws and even transportation laws to the grocery stores. The food that is used in commercial dog food does not have to follow any of these laws! What is even worse, animal foods are allowed to contain some of the most disgusting waste imaginable without any laws to force them to inform us of the actual contents. Rotten fruits and vegetables, expired meats, frozen dinners (including the packaging!!) and restaurant grease that has been used and should be discarded and are not for human consumption are used in pet foods! It is not good enough to give us but it is to give our family pets? Something is wrong with that picture if you ask me. Another shocker which really pushed me over to the home cooked side is that they have meat that is labeled 4D food. Each D stands for "Diseased" "Dying" "Dead" or "Disabled". That means Road kill, Cattle that died from disease or chickens that died from old age. Food that they would/could never use in food for human consumption. If I can't eat it because it is unhealthy, no way am I giving it to my dog Bella!, That sealed the deal for me and if I am not mistaken might just seal the deal for most of you that took the time to read this.

Now, lets move from Why to How. If you are just starting out feeding home cooked food to Fido, you will have to introduce it gradually so that they don't end up with diarrhea or vomiting. I would start off mixing two parts

commercial to two parts cooked for 3 or 4 days. If all is well, progress to 2/3 home cooked to 1/3 commercial for 3-4 days. If you are on a roll and everyone is happy, go full home cooked. If during this process you have any stomach issues, add some rice and pumpkin and see if that does not resolve it. If you are still having problems you might have to back it up and change it even more gradually so Milo's stomach can adjust.

Another note to be made before we move into the recipes is that it is very important to make the meals balanced. An animals balanced meal is different than our balanced meals. But this does not mean that EVERY meal has to be completely balanced. The balance can be obtained over a week or even a month. We are made to be seasonal eaters so that means that we get certain nutritional values from different foods. Some are available in the winter and some are available in the summer. What is most important is that we provide ALL the vitamin and minerals during a reasonable amount of time so that their bodies are working at optimal speed :-). The best way to do this is to give them variety. I make three different recipes at one time and put them in containers that hold 3 or 4 meals each and freeze them. At the beginning of the week I take out one of each and I alternate all three for her meals for 3 or 4 days. When I am at the last meal I take out another container of each. Each meal I made has different vitamins and minerals in them. Each meal by its self does not have all the needed vitamins and minerals but combined Bella gets a completely balanced diet. I am going to end this article with two recipes, but there is still a ton of information that I have to share with you. With that said, the next article is going to be dedicated to the Raw diet.

This recipe is called a "Supplement Stew". This recipe is full of nutritional needs and you pour this over your actual meal so that it evenly distributes all the nutrition over the full recipe. This way you do not have to try and figure out how much for each individual meal.

SUPPLEMENT STEW

- 4 multivitamin tablets (one a day Men's preferred) (women's have to much iron)
- 6 Brazil nuts
- Crush the vitamin tablets individually and add to a food processor with the Brazil nuts. Pulse 5 seconds, or until the vitamins are reduced to a fine powder and the nuts resemble small meal
- 1/2 cup soy lecithin granules (I got at whole foods)
- 1 Tablespoon Nutritional Yeast
- 3 Tablespoons Eggshell Powder (recipe to follow)
- 1 Tablespoon dried Kelp or Seaweed Powder
- 1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar (shake vigorously before measuring)
- 1/4 cup Salmon or Cod Liver oil
- Add the soy lecithin, nutritional yeast, Eggshell Powder and Kelp to the food processor and then layer the yogurt, vinegar and fish oil on top. (This helps to prevent any dust from forming when you open the food processor.)
- Pulse the mixture for an additional 15 seconds and then divide into 4 portions of 1/3 cup each for, adding to finished recipes.
- Store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month.

-Mix 1/3 cup Supplement Stew with 2/3 cup water, then blend into a finished recipe (with a yield of at least 8 cups) once the recipe has cooled.

YIELD: 1 1/3 cups, enough to supplement 4 meals recipes.

NOTE: first, I double the recipe so I don't have to worry for about two months. Also depending on the size of Snowball, I break it into more servings. Bella is 7 pounds and I feel comfortable breaking into 8 parts rather than 4. I wrap each serving of Stew onto a piece of wax paper, fold and store in a zip locked Baggie in your freezer. EASY!

Note: this really smells when you make it but not after you add it to the food.

EGGSHELL POWDER

12 Eggshells, Cleaned and dried (I either use the eggs to make egg salad or I actually chop and add to the main recipe that I am making.)

Once clean and dry, eggshells can be left at room temperature in an airtight container until you save enough to make a batch.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees

Spread the eggshells evenly on a baking sheet and bake for 5 to 7 minutes.

The eggshells will still be mostly white or brown but might have a light tint which is okay. Baking eggshells any longer can produce an unpleasant smell.

Allow the eggshells to cool, then grind in a blender or clean coffee grinder for 1 minute, or until you achieve a very fine powder with no sharp edges.

Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 2 months. YIELD: 12 teaspoons.

– once the recipe is finished and cooled, I mix one packet of Supplement Stew with 2/3 cup water or juice from the recipe, then blend into a cooled finished recipe!

I first wrote this article a few years ago, but I continually rewrite it to keep it up to date. With that said, since I wrote this article I have switched over to raw and so happy that I did. Bella's last physical they said she was in perfect condition. I have not completely dropped home cooking out of her diet though. At least one meal a day she will get raw food by itself or mixed with cooked. I also have been trying a new supplement that seems to be working well, DinOvite. I have a very limited amount that is for sale in the salon now, but hopefully we will be carrying a full line soon.

The raw diet is so easy and I still do cooked food and alternate and sometimes mix them together.

What I do for the raw is so easy and a lot cheaper than store bought food.

10 pounds of 80-85% hamburger. (the fat is healthy for them. You don't want to use less than 85%.)

12 hard boiled eggs WITH shells (this is great calcium for them) grind the shells to a fine powder or very tiny pieces the size of a pin head.

4 cups of white rice. (NOT brown)

1 package of DinOvite OR the Supplement Stew.

Mix it all together. ..

I fill snack size zip lock bags and freeze. Every two-three days I take one out of the freezer. So far it has been about 2 months since I made it and I am only half done! Again, I also switch or mix with cooked food.

Cooked food is easier than you would think as well.....

-I get all kinds of meat such as veal stew meat, chicken, lamb, beef, turkey, organ meat (organ meat is SO healthy for them!) calves liver, chicken liver, beef heart, chicken heart, tripe etc. I also use shrimp or salmon oil.

-sauté in safflower oil.

-Use all kinds of frozen veggies. Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, string beans, squash, spinach, kale, zucchini, tomatoes.

-Pick two or three meats such as chicken, chicken liver and chicken hearts. Either ground or cut into small pieces.

-Choose about two, three or four veggies.

-Using a large frying pan, put approximately 3 Tbl of Safflower oil.

-Sauté the meat till about half cooked. Add your veggies. Cook till about 2/3 done.

-Let cool and then add your DinOvite.

-Package up and freeze.

-Only cooking till 2/3 done. (This will allow you to warm up a bit without cooking all the nutrients out of it when you take it out of the refrigerator.)



-I also add 1 ice cube of raw Goats milk. (I use "Answers" which I will also be selling at the salon very soon)

Goats milk is fantastic for their immune system! You will see a change in their bowel movements. It will be lighter in weight, does not smell and less volume. This means that their body is using most of the nutrients! Their eyes will also become brighter :-)