

Raw Meat and Bones

At Guide Dogs NSW/ACT our policy has been upgraded to remove all sources of raw meat and bones from the diet of our pups and dogs. None of our pups or dogs should receive raw meat or bones in their diet.

What issues have we experienced when feeding raw meat and bones?

Salmonella and Campylobacter are two types of bacteria that cause gastroenteritis in dogs. These bacteria are zoonotic – they can be spread to, and cause disease in, humans. We have had outbreaks of diarrhoea in our dogs when they are fed raw meat or bones. In most adult dogs, it can be self-limiting, whereas in our pups it can cause severe disease.

Our biggest concern is the carrier state that can develop. When a dog is fed raw meat or bones, it may just present with a single case of soft faeces, but it can become a carrier of the bacteria. Any time that dog is stressed, it can shed the bacteria into the environment. If the dog is one of our breeding females, she can infect her pups in the neonatal period, when they have very little immunity to disease. When this occurs, it can cause severe disease, and be rapidly fatal.

Treating with antibiotics when the dog has diarrhoea is more likely to cause the carrier state to develop. Therefore, we try to avoid antibiotics in cases of mild diarrhoea. Unfortunately, if the dog is becoming rapidly unwell or not improving with other treatments, antibiotics are necessary.

Bones have the added problem of potentially causing obstructions or damage to the teeth. We have had to perform abdominal surgeries and tooth removals on our dogs associated with the consumption of bones.

How can we keep the teeth clean?

There are dental chews and toys that can assist in keeping the teeth clean. Please speak to your Puppy Development Advisor for advice on the best products available.

Other sources of Salmonella

If you keep chickens at home, please do not allow your pup or dog access to the chicken faeces.