



P.O. Box 78090  
Callingwood RPO  
Edmonton, AB T5T 6A1

P. (780) 717-7297 (PAWS)  
F. (780) 401-6170

www.arushapetfoods.com  
info@arushapetfoods.com

*Excerpts from Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats,  
By Kymythy R. Schultze, C.C.N., A.H.I.  
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*Pg 4-6:  
Raw Food*

Over a period of ten years, from 1932 to 1942, in a strictly controlled experiment involving 900 cats, Francis Pottenger Jr., M.D., proved the importance of feeding raw food to animals. The study was conducted within the most rigorous scientific standards of the day, and the pathological and chemical findings were also supervised by Alvin G. Foord, M.D., professor of pathology at the University of Southern California and pathologist at the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena.

Dr. Pottenger found a startling contrast in health between cats fed a cooked food diet and cats fed a raw food diet. The cats on the raw food diet thrived in good health. They reproduced easily, and their kittens were uniform in size and vigor. The cats that were fed cooked food swiftly deteriorated in health until, by the third generation, they could no longer reproduce. These cats suffered from behavior problems, allergies, skin problems, parasites, skeletal deformities, organ malfunctions (including those of the heart, thyroid, kidney, liver, testes, ovaries, and bladder), and inflammation of the nervous system.

When the first- and second-generation cooked-food cats were placed on a raw food diet, it took four generations for their line to recover from the ill effects of consuming cooked food. The study found that when a female cat was fed a cooked food diet even for only 12 to 18 months, she was unable to ever give birth to normal kittens. But, when her kittens were placed on a raw food diet, a gradual regeneration took place. Dr. Pottenger's theory proved true: that heat alters raw food, with a negative effect on health.

Biologists have yet to discover any wild carnivore that cooks its food. A carnivore's body has been designed to derive its needed nutrients from raw food. Many successful zoos and other captive habitats have discovered that they cannot keep their animals healthy and able to reproduce unless they are fed raw food. Cooking or heat processing actually changes the molecular structure of food, binding food molecules tighter together. This makes them more difficult to digest and transforms them into "foreign" or unfamiliar food.

Cooked food takes longer to digest and therefore requires more of the animal's energy. Heat also destroys enzymes and antioxidants, which are very important for good health. In fact, enzymes are needed for every biochemical activity in your dog's or cat's body. And, unfortunately, the body has a limited supply of its own enzymes. It is designed to consume enzymes in raw food. When the pancreas is called upon to produce enzymes because the ingested cooked food has none, the pancreas must enlarge and work harder than it is designed to. When stressed, the pancreas sends white blood cells, or leukocytes, to the digestive system to aid in digestion. But when the leukocytes use their enzymatic activity to aid digestion, they are less able to help destroy bacteria and foreign invaders in the body. This impairs the immune system.

There are many biochemical interactions that occur within the body, creating necessary nutrients such as some of the B vitamins and vitamin K. Cooked food interferes with many of these normal processes. Studies have found that when meat is cooked at high temperatures, cancer-forming compounds develop that interfere with the body's genetic structure. Heat also destroys many vital amino acids, vitamins, and minerals—some of which, undoubtedly, we have yet to even discover.

Cooking food also transforms its essential fatty acids, which are so named because they are essential to your pet's health. They must come from food sources. When essential fatty acids are heated or exposed to light or oxygen, they become trans-fats—dangerous toxins that weaken your pet. Research confirms that trans-fats have a detrimental effect on the reproductive system, immune system, cell membranes, cardiovascular system, and liver function. Trans-fats also do not provide good transport throughout the body for fat-soluble vitamins.

In 1997, oncologists from Colorado State University's College of Veterinary Medicine published diet recommendations to help combat the number-one killer of our beloved pets: cancer. Their recommendations suggest excluding lactate- and glucose-containing fluids, because cancer cells thrive on sugars and create lactate as a waste product. Lactate poisons the animal by depleting its energy, thus weakening it. The study recommends limiting sugars and simple carbohydrates. The researchers concluded that a diet relatively high in fat and low in simple carbohydrates resulted in a longer survival time for cancer victims.

Of note is the fact that cancer cells cannot utilize fat, which is an excellent natural energy source for dogs and cats. They also found that omega-3 fatty acids reduce lactate levels and have the ability to reduce or eliminate metastatic disease. Since heat and hydrogenation destroy these essential fatty acids, raw foods are a good source of these vital nutrients.

Sugar comes in many forms. Many processed and even "natural" foods contain sugar. Grains and dairy products are biologically inappropriate sources of sugar for dogs and cats. The study also recommends feeding protein that is highly biodegradable. The body cannot utilize nutrients if it can't easily break down the food within the body.

A homemade species-appropriate diet can fulfill anti-cancer recommendations and may play a crucial role in prevention and treatment of this terrible disease. The above study only adds to the growing body of knowledge about many foods important to avoid, such as:

**1. Sugar.** As just discussed, cancer cells thrive on sugars. Sugar comes in many forms, including beet, raw, brown, cane, fructose, corn sweetener, corn syrup, date, dextrin, dextrose, glucose, lactose, maltose, manitol, polydextrose, sorbital, sorghum, sucanat, sucrose, turbinado, barley malt, molasses, honey, and maple syrup. Sugar is addictive, damages the pancreas, and drains vitamins and minerals from the body. It is implicated in hypoglycemia, diabetes, obesity, behavior problems, cataracts, tooth decay, arthritis, allergies, and cancer. Yeast also thrives on sugar. In a 1993 study, unhealthy candida yeast overgrowth was 200 times greater in animals receiving dextrose than in control groups that did not receive the sugar.

**4. Grain.** Dogs and cats have no nutritional need for grains. Carbohydrates or energy from grains is not required by dogs and cats. Fats are their best, species-appropriate source of energy, and they are also able to derive energy needs from protein. Energy is the "fuel" that sustains life and all bodily functions.

Wild prey animal stomachs may contain grasses, bark, insects, roots, nuts, seeds, and other plant matter-but not modern grain, unless the animal was grazing previously in a field of domesticated grain. Even so, the majority of our dogs' and cats' evolutionary history, which formed their physiology, did not include prey animals that ate domesticated grain. Grains were domesticated and used as a staple in some human cultures only recently in evolutionary history, so prey animals and predators did not have access to them until that time. And domesticated grains differ structurally from wild grains. Everything about our dogs' and cats' anatomy dictates that they are not natural grain eaters.

Grains break down into sugar within the body and can supply nourishment for yeast overgrowth. Grains are also mucus-forming and may contribute to many health problems including allergies, ear infections, skin problems, bloating, joint problems, mal-absorption, and digestive disorders.

Dr. Russell Swift, a nutritionally oriented veterinarian, feels that feeding grains to carnivores weakens their immune system and pancreas and may also lead to dental calculus. For cats and dogs, a good source of energy within a truly natural diet can be secured with raw fat and protein, not unnatural grain carbohydrates.

**6. Yeast.** A very reliable remedy to rid your property of pesky ants is to mix yeast with sugar. The ants eagerly eat the mixture, which then expands, causing them to bloat, or explode, and die. Commercial yeasts are not natural foods for dogs and cats, and do not offer any nutrients that cannot be obtained from more species-appropriate sources. Yeast is a fungus, and most pets cannot tolerate it. Consuming yeast may also encourage yeast overgrowth within the body, which can lead to many health problems, including those of the digestive and urinary systems. Feeding yeast can unbalance your pet's calcium/phosphorus ratio due to yeast's high phosphorus content. Different forms of yeast include brewer's, nutritional, baker's, torula, and primary.