



# Getting started

Many of my canine patients took on a new lease of life, became like puppies again, when I changed their diet to raw meaty bones and a few table scraps. Puppies started on a more natural diet grew healthy and strong and seldom needed veterinary care. Perhaps I should not have been surprised; for Nature works wonders in numerous ways and a diet of raw meaty bones plus a few scraps approximates to the natural diet of dogs in the wild. How and why natural food works wonders are questions needing answers. For now, though, we can tap into the benefits, we can feed our dogs raw meaty bones.

This back-to-basics approach puts us in touch with the inner needs of our dogs—and it's easy.

Throughout the book I refer to Nature's teachings so that if you are stuck for an answer you can refer to Nature too. As you gain in confidence, you may want to share your discoveries. 'Think of Nature' tell your friends and neighbors when you want them to savor the simplicity and joy of feeding dogs the natural way.

Once you make a start many things will help reinforce your commitment:

- The looks of contentment on furry faces.
- The satisfying crunch of teeth shearing bone.
- Trim, taut, terrific pets free from debilitating diseases.

- Vet bills that decline or disappear.
- Natural feeding provides a tonic for humans too.

You will appreciate that Nature does not affix labels to things or distinguish between food and medicine. Natural food cures and prevents a range of diseases—it's the ideal medicine.

- You will step off the commercial merry-go-round of the junk pet-food industry and the veterinary profession and be part of a movement for a better world, free of ill health and suffering.
- You will gain in confidence as a result of your increased understanding and closer contact with Nature.

### *It's not new*

It's not new, it's just that we forgot and then let commercial interests take control. Hippocrates, the famous Greek physician in the 5th century BC, said:

Leave your drugs in the chemist's pot if you can heal your patients with food.<sup>1</sup>

Animals in the wild instinctively know what's good for them. If they wish to stay well they need to be well fed. Hence a lion's willingness to face off against a full-grown buffalo bull. Imagine if your dinner came charging at you, 2000 pounds of muscle and bone, intent on flattening you. For the big cats the importance of a correct diet requires that they take risks every time they feel hungry.

Wolves, the predecessors of our domestic dogs, are similarly driven to make huge efforts to stay well fed and healthy. Running through deep snow takes energy and, once they close in for the kill, wolves risk injury from sharp hooves and horns.

In Australia dingoes, dogs that escaped domestication, lead a tough life in the mountains and arid range lands. No fireside rug in the winter or airconditioned comfort in the summer for them.

Instead they depend on catching the right food for survival and an opportunity to breed. In areas where easy-to-catch sheep and goats are plentiful packs of dingoes still prefer to hunt kangaroos and wallabies.<sup>2</sup> Yes; it comes down to the quality of the meat and bone. The dingoes' natural instincts lead them to expend more effort to obtain the best—good quality food and medicine comes at a price.

If you watch the TV Discovery Channel you'll see carnivores doing what Nature intended—catching and consuming whole carcasses of other animals. If our pet dogs had the chance, that's what they would be doing too.

*Note:* Catching *carcasses*, not catching meat. Our name for predatory animals is *carnivore*, meaning meat eater. But that's only part of the truth. If we feed lions, wolves or dogs on meat and meat alone then problems arise. It's essential that predators have lots of bone in the diet so that their own bones grow strong. If we described our predatory animals as *carcassivores* I believe we would already be halfway to understanding their dietary needs and thus preparing to meet those needs—whole carcasses of other animals.

At this point you may be feeling a little nervous. Chances are you and your pets live in a civilized place far removed from the wilderness of Discovery Channel documentaries. Please relax. We need firm foundations. We need to establish what Nature had in mind. Once we've done that we shall have a sound base upon which to build a raw meaty bones and table scraps alternative that provides ease, economy and efficiency for modern pet owners.

### *Chemical and physical—food and medicine*

Let's contemplate for a moment what wild predators obtain when they eat whole carcasses of other animals as opposed to the canned mush or dry kibble out of a packet—the so called food but not medicine of the average domestic pet.

The chemicals, we call them nutrients, in carcasses are ideal for the energy, growth and body-repair needs of carnivores. But

more than that, the right quality and quantity of nutrients ensure tiptop functioning of all body systems. And that's what we mean by being in *good health*—body systems, free of stress, functioning well and supporting each other. Hence we can say that the proper diet provides *medicinal* benefits.

Nature's grand design includes the physical form and texture of the food too. Carnivores need nutrients—proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins and trace elements—and those nutrients need to be raw, tough and chewy.

By ripping, tearing and crunching their way through tough, chewy carcasses (or large pieces of raw meaty bones) carnivores also wash, scrub and polish their teeth and gums. We humans maintain dental hygiene by tooth brushing and flossing after we eat. Carnivores brush and floss *as they eat*. Clean teeth and gums are an essential part of what it means to be *healthy*.

Most pets fed processed food have dirty, plaque-laden teeth and sore gums. The bacteria in plaque produce foul gases—that's where the term 'dog breath' comes from. 'Dog breath' is bad enough, but it's the impact of diseased teeth and gums, periodontal disease, on the rest of the body that is the major reason for concern. Research shows that animals with periodontal disease are more likely to suffer from liver, kidney and immune system problems.<sup>3</sup> Affected animals are often caught in a downward spiral of ill health.

Ripping and tearing raw meat from bones takes time and effort—and hence confers other benefits. Muscles of the jaws, neck and chest gain exercise, digestive juices flow, neurological and immune systems get a boost.<sup>4</sup> The life force of carnivores directs them to devour carcasses. Ripping and tearing their food stimulates the flow of brain chemicals which in turn help tone the hormonal and immune systems—that's the essence of wellbeing.<sup>5</sup>

Digestive enzymes in the stomach and intestines are designed to work on food of the correct chemical and physical composition. In the colon (large bowel), healthy animals have a large population of

bacteria necessary for the final digestive stages. When the correct chemical and physical balance is upset then unwelcome bacteria proliferate—with resultant bad smells, diarrhea and worse.<sup>6</sup>

Did you notice the suitable nutrients listed included proteins and fats but carbohydrates didn't get a mention? That's because dogs have no known requirement for carbohydrates in the diet.<sup>7</sup> Carbohydrates come from the starches in grains and the sugars in fruit. Cellulose, another carbohydrate, gives plants their fibrous structure and makes for the bulky fecal deposits of herbivores. The occasional slice of bread or left-over pasta is unlikely to do much harm to your dog. It's the regular feeding of grain based commercial diets—neither chemically nor physically suitable—that do intense harm.

Grain in processed food is poorly digested and leads to soft, bulky dog droppings that foul parks and gardens the world over. Pets fed raw carcasses or a diet based on raw meaty bones produce a fraction of the waste. Odors are minimal and the droppings turn chalky white in the sun.



### *Healthy skepticism*

If Nature got it so right how then did we, as a society, get it so wrong? Various answers could be advanced, but one common denominator seems to be our misplaced trust in so called 'experts'.

During human evolution our ancestors, living in caves and make-shift shelters, provided the ancestors of modern dogs with an excellent diet—whole carcasses when available, otherwise raw meaty bones, offal and leftover scraps. Chances are our ancestors devoted little or no thought to the matter of diets for dogs. They did what came naturally.

For us, our thoughts and actions are conditioned by the words of experts. We discuss feeding, not in terms of how to throw a carcass out of the cave, but in terms of calories, proteins and fats and a host of specialized concepts implanted in our minds by experts.

When it comes to the practical aspects of feeding our pets the pet-food company experts have taken charge. Packaged, cooked, pulverized grains in cans and packets leave the conveyor belt and appear as eye-catching displays on supermarket shelves. Experts in advertising and marketing craft the TV commercials and experts working for government regulatory departments condone the production of unsuitable, unsafe products promoted with a constant stream of misinformation.

Over a number of years, as our pets became sicker with failing hearts, kidneys, immune systems, dog breath and skin disease the veterinary experts assumed control. Seldom if ever blaming the artificial and harmful diets, (many) veterinary experts blame the failing body systems. 'A weak heart', 'a defective immune system', 'failing kidneys' they say. And when the veterinary experts cannot stem the tide of sick bedraggled animals, they call for more research and open more veterinary schools to train more experts.

Yes, our ancestors who domesticated the wolf and then developed the dog breeds we know today did what came naturally

at little or no cost and the food they fed worked wonders. We place our trust in experts and pay a high price. Our pets pay with their lives.

How then to break free from the multiple strands of misinformation that bind us to the 'experts'? I suggest we need to develop a healthy skepticism—a willingness to doubt all aspects of our cultural conditioning—let our minds travel back to a time when Nature's teachings were the first and only set of instructions. Also, may I suggest that you learn by doing—like a toddler taking first steps. Make a start, and soon you will be reveling in your newfound accomplishment.



