

Pet Owner Mouth and Advice Checklists

Safe observation and adviser filters

How to use these checklists

These checklists are designed to protect pet owners from unsafe mouth handling, hostile or incomplete veterinary advice, and muddled raw-feeding claims. They are not a substitute for competent clinical assessment.

A. Safe Observation Checklist: Do Not Force the Mouth

Do not force open your dog or cat's mouth. Do not put your fingers between the teeth. Do not wrestle, frighten or punish the animal. A painful or frightened pet may bite or scratch.

Breath: Is there bad breath, sour smell, blood smell or pus smell?

Eating: Does the pet chew, or merely swallow? Does it drop food, avoid one side, prefer soft food, or walk away from harder pieces?

Behaviour: Is there pawing at the mouth, face rubbing, drooling, reluctance to play, irritability or sudden fussiness?

Visible clues: When the lips lift naturally, can you see red gum margins, brown tartar, bleeding, swelling, retained baby teeth, broken teeth or teeth that appear too long?

Body clues: Is there dull coat, low vitality, recurring skin trouble, digestive upset or old-age behaviour that may partly reflect chronic oral disease?

History: Has the pet been fed processed, soft, minced, cooked or mushy food? Has it lacked regular raw meaty bones? Has it ever had proper dental treatment?

Action: Record observations, take photos or video only if safe, and seek competent dental assessment. Ask for a plan that restores comfort first and then maintains the mouth with suitable raw meaty bones food/medicine.

B. Checklist: When a Vet Dismisses Raw Meaty Bones

Use this calmly. The aim is not to argue, but to find out whether the advice deals with the biological problem.

1. **Did the vet examine the mouth properly?** A quick glance at the tooth crowns is not enough. Ask whether the gums, gum margins, retained baby teeth, bite, loose teeth, pain, pockets, abscesses and chewing function have been assessed.
2. **Did the vet distinguish between a healthy mouth and a diseased mouth?** Raw meaty bones may be unsuitable or difficult for an animal with advanced dental disease until dentistry has been performed. That does not invalidate raw meaty bones.
3. **Did the vet offer a maintenance plan?** If raw meaty bones are rejected, ask what will maintain tooth cleaning, gum massage, saliva flow, jaw exercise, chewing behaviour and long-term periodontal health.
4. **Did the vet explain the physical function of food?** Carnivore food is not merely a list of nutrients. It should require ripping, tearing, gnawing and chewing.
5. **Did the vet treat bad breath and gum inflammation as serious?** Bad breath, red gums, bleeding, drooling, loose teeth and reluctance to chew should not be dismissed as normal ageing.
6. **Did the vet discuss the limits of processed food?** If the recommended diet is soft, sticky, powdered, canned, kibble, cooked, minced or highly processed, ask how it will prevent periodontal disease over months and years.
7. **Is the advice product-centred or animal-centred?** Be cautious when the answer quickly becomes a brand, prescription diet, dental chew, supplement or recurring procedure without explaining mouth function.
8. **Is the vet open to staged care?** A sensible plan may include dental treatment first, careful introduction of suitable raw meaty bones, and follow-up monitoring.
9. **Does the vet acknowledge uncertainty?** A trustworthy adviser can say, "This case needs careful assessment." Overconfident blanket rejection is not the same as expertise.
10. **Does the advice pass the mouth-function test?** Ask: Will this help my dog or cat maintain a clean, comfortable, functional carnivore mouth for life?

C. Checklist: Testing BARF, PMR, RAW, Influencer and Junk-Raw Advice

Not everything called raw is equivalent to raw meaty bones. Use this checklist before trusting an influencer, merchant, recipe system or online feeding group.

11. **Do they start with the mouth?** If they discuss ratios, ingredients, supplements or recipes before teeth, gums, chewing and periodontal disease, their advice is incomplete.
12. **Do they understand dentistry?** Ask what should happen if a puppy has retained baby teeth, a kitten has inflamed gums, a dog has loose teeth, or an older cat has painful periodontal disease.
13. **Do they distinguish raw meaty bones from minced raw food?** Minced meat, patties, tubs, powders and mush do not provide the same ripping, tearing, gnawing and gum-massage function.
14. **Do they explain food as food/medicine?** Raw meaty bones nourish while also cleaning teeth, massaging gums, exercising jaws, stimulating saliva, supporting behaviour and conditioning the mouth-body system.
15. **Do they rely on nutrient arithmetic?** Be cautious if the main message is percentages, ratios, spreadsheets, complete-and-balanced claims, supplements or laboratory-style formulation.
16. **Do they denigrate raw meaty bones as inadequate while selling a substitute?** Ask what their substitute does physically in the mouth. If it cannot clean teeth and massage gums, it is not equivalent.
17. **Do they have a plan for diseased mouths?** A responsible adviser should say that some animals need dental treatment before they can comfortably and safely use raw meaty bones.
18. **Do they encourage product-dependence?** If the solution requires ongoing branded tubs, powders, additives, courses or consultations, ask whether the system has simply replaced kibble-dependence with raw-product dependence.
19. **Do they oppose the junk pet-food system clearly?** Advice that borrows the language of nature while avoiding the processed pet-food problem may be incomplete.
20. **Does the advice pass the carnivore-function test?** Ask: Does this system let my dog or cat function as a carnivore - chewing, tearing, gnawing, cleaning the mouth, maintaining healthy gums and gaining real nourishment?

D. Cost and practical planning

Proper diagnostic handling, anaesthesia and dental treatment may be costly. Ask for a staged plan: urgent pain and infection control first, essential dental treatment, careful introduction of appropriate raw meaty bones, then monitoring. Dentistry is not a luxury when the mouth is diseased. It is the entry fee to proper raw meaty bones feeding.