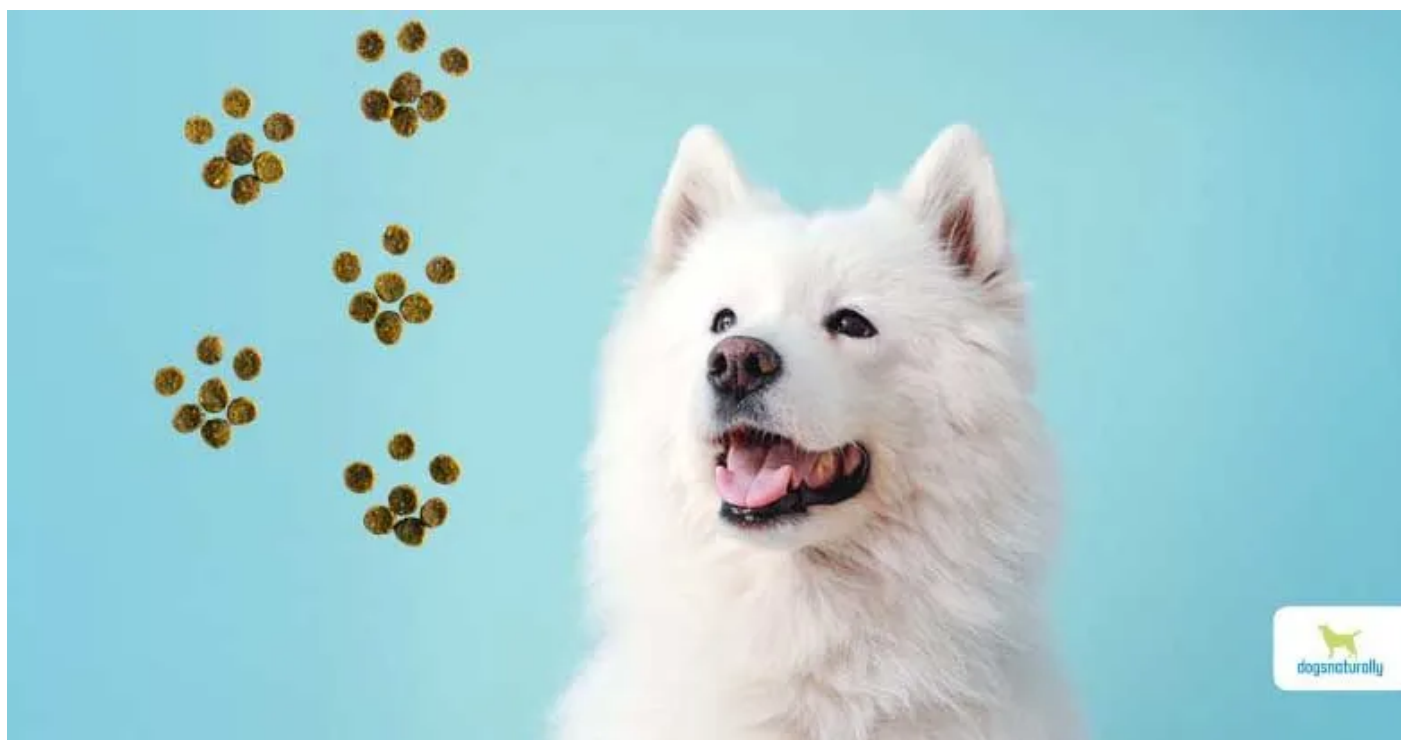




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Can't Do Raw? How To Make Dog Kibble Better



Julia Henriques(<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/author/julia-henriques-2/>) | 2023-09-28

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Are you one of the millions of dog owners who can't feed raw? Let's face it ... raw feeders are still in the minority. Most dogs today still eat kibble. It may be because of budget, or convenience. Or perhaps you just can't deal with all that raw meat.

But you still want to give your dog the best food you can. So you'd like to make his meals more nutritious for him by adding fresh food to kibble.

So, if your dog is still eating kibble for any reason ... here's how to supplement dog food with some boosters that'll make dog kibble better.

6 Kibble Boosters For Dogs

One way to improve your dog's meals is by adding fresh food to dog kibble, and we'll tell you some things to add to kibble to make it healthier. But first, here's one easy change that will give your dog a wider range of nutrients right away.

#1 Vary The Food

Why shouldn't you give your dog the same food every day?



HOMEMADE DIETS MADE EASY

Better Bones is naturally air dried bones from grass-fed Australian cattle. It's the safe and natural way to balance your dog's raw or home cooked meals.

SHOP NOW

Well, first, how would you like to eat breakfast cereal every single day of your life, for every meal? Because that's what eating kibble is like! It's boring for your dog to eat the same food all the time. But, far more important, you'll improve his diet by giving him more variety.

But don't just rotate his food by choosing different kibbles or proteins from the same manufacturer. That won't give him enough variety ...

Rotate Proteins And Vary The Brand

Most manufacturers use the same formula or vitamin premix in every line of food. They just change the protein and maybe a couple of other ingredients. So, instead of different formulas from the same brand ... try **rotating the brand of food you give your dog!** That way he'll get lots of different ingredients and formulas.

Rotating brands also lowers the risk of any excess or deficient vitamin problems for your dog. For example, dogs have been sickened by **excess vitamin D** in some dog foods. The FDA has even warned about this problem ... advising that vitamin D toxicity can cause kidney failure and even death.

You can help lower the risk of nutrient excesses or deficiencies. **Rotate proteins and feed a variety of brands** to give your dog a wider range of nutrients.

By providing variety for your dog, you'll **create a stronger gut**. Your dog will get used to many different foods ... so he won't get digestive upset from rotating. And he'll be **less likely to develop food sensitivities** ... which can sometimes happen from eating the same food all the time.

If your dog's used to eating one food all the time, you might want to start your food rotations gradually to avoid tummy-aches or loose stool. Start by mixing some of the new food with the old ... and increase the new food as his digestive system adapts! His body will soon get used to the variety.

Next, give your dog some kibble boosters by adding fresh foods.

#2 Add Fresh Food To Kibble To Promote Good Gut Bacteria

Well-balanced gut bacteria are vitally important to support your dog's digestive and immune systems. You can improve your dog's health by adding kibble boosters that help his gut.

Your dog's gut is home to about 90% of his immune system. Probiotics ... the good bacteria living in your dog's intestinal tract ... help protect your dog from chronic disease and illness by ...

- Protecting the body from bacteria, viruses and fungi.
- Creating a barrier against cancer-causing toxins, drugs, heavy metals and allergens.
- Helping the body absorb nutrients like calcium, magnesium and iron.

- Supporting your dog's digestive and immune systems.

Some kibbles contain probiotic supplements. But they're not usually effective ... because the live bacteria **don't survive high processing temperatures or long-term storage**.

So it's a great idea to **boost kibble by adding probiotic foods like fermented vegetables. Fermented foods help promote friendly bacteria. Or you can give a probiotic supplement.**

Include Prebiotics

It's even better to **include prebiotic foods** too. **Prebiotics are a type of soluble fiber** or resistant starch that **feed the good bacteria** in the gut. They help make the probiotics more effective. Some prebiotic fresh foods to add to dog kibble include ...

- Mushrooms (cooked or powdered whole [mushrooms for dogs](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/medicinal-mushrooms-for-dogs-multi-dimensional-healing/) (<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/medicinal-mushrooms-for-dogs-multi-dimensional-healing/>))
- Garlic
- Dandelion greens
- Burdock root

You may find your kibble has prebiotics ... they'll be on an ingredient label with names like fructooligosaccharides (FOS), chicory root, inulin, guar gum or beet pulp. You can also buy prebiotic supplements ... or use a **supplement that includes both prebiotics and probiotics**.

RELATED: [Everything you need to know about probiotics for dogs ...](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/6-best-probiotics-for-dogs/) (<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/6-best-probiotics-for-dogs/>).

#3 How To Supplement Dog Food To Help Digestion

Have you ever put pineapple juice or marinade on meat and noticed the bubbling? The principle behind marinating is that certain foods can digest (or break down) other fresh foods. Those are digestive enzymes at work. The **enzymes in fresh foods can ease the digestive process** and help your dog absorb more nutrients.

Some kibble may have added enzymes. You can usually recognize an enzyme by words that end in *-ase* on the ingredient panel. Lipase breaks down lipids or fats. Amylase breaks down starches. Protease breaks down proteins into smaller amino acids. These are only a few of many enzymes. But these enzymes may not survive high-heat processing. So it's best to add enzymes in a different way.

Add Fresh Vegetables For Enzymes

One thing you can do is **add some fresh veggies to your dog's food**. But don't just toss some raw carrots in his bowl. Here's why ...

Herbivores have a digestive enzyme called cellulase. Cellulase allows a plant-eater to break down cellulose ... a component of plant cell walls. This helps release other nutrients from the plant material. **But carnivores like dogs don't have cellulase**. This explains why a chunk of raw carrot usually passes right through your dog in one piece!

Adding fresh vegetables to kibble is a great way to provide your dog with some live enzymes. But first, make them digestible by lightly steaming or mulching/puréeing them.

Or, you can make it even easier. Boost your dog's kibble by adding **a digestive enzyme supplement** to his bowl. You can add powdered digestive enzymes to processed kibble. Sprinkle the powder onto the food before serving.

#4 Add Fresh Food To Dog Kibble For Whole Food Nutrients

Many kibble manufacturers claim their food is *complete and balanced* ... so they say you shouldn't add anything to their food. Your conventional veterinarian will likely say the same thing. But the truth is, the lab-made, synthetic vitamins in most dog foods just aren't enough to nourish your dog.

Why Avoid Synthetic Vitamins?

Over time, your dog's cell receptors can become clogged with these fake vitamins ... and they stop working properly. Excessive synthetic vitamins in the food can even be toxic to your dog.

Fresh, whole food-sourced vitamins are complex. The body's cells recognize them ... so they use them much more efficiently than synthetics. But when your dog gets synthetic vitamins in his food, it can even reduce the absorption of healthful, whole-food vitamins.

Give Fresh Food Nutrition

Adding whole foods to provide natural vitamins and minerals lets your dog's body pick and choose what it needs. So, to help your dog get extra, absorbable n, fresh fruits and veggies are great things to add to kibble.

Try adding some **blended or lightly cooked fruits and vegetables** to your dog's bowl. This can meet two needs: the need for **enzymes** (as I explained earlier) ... and the need for **whole food vitamins**.

Many dog owners also add other functional foods, like ...

- Greens and sea greens (like kelp)
- Berries (especially [blueberries](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/can-dogs-eat-blueberries/)) and cranberries)
- Broccoli sprouts (for their powerful [sulforaphane](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/functional-foods-every-dog-needs/))
- Herbal blends
- Mushroom combinations
- Wheat grass

These can provide a valuable nutrient boost that can support your dog's immunity, gut health ... and even help ward off cancer.

RELATED: [5 functional foods every dog needs ...](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/functional-foods-every-dog-needs/)

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Organ Meats

Organ meats are nutrient-dense foods for your dog. Adding a wide range of fresh organ meats is a fantastic way to give your dog more vitamins, minerals and amino acids. But it can be hard to find organs beyond liver or kidney. And there's definitely an "ick factor" in those squishy raw organs (there's a reason they call it "offal").

If you can't find a wide variety of fresh or frozen organ meats, you can buy organ meats in powdered form (<https://thenaturaldogstore.com/collections/nutrition/products/four-leaf-rover-guts-glory>). Giving glandular supplements that contain several organ meats can really add a kick to your dog's nutrition.

These foods can provide prebiotics, enzymes, whole food vitamins and minerals, and even fatty acids.

#5 Supplement Dog Kibble With Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Most kibble diets don't contain healthful fats. Even if they're on the ingredient list ... they're lost with heating and processing. In fact, processing can produce hydrogenated or trans fats, which can be very dangerous.

Most plant-derived fats provide omega-6 and 9 fatty acids, which are pro-inflammatory. But omega-3 fatty acids are anti-inflammatory. **And there aren't enough omega-3s in kibble.** Kibble-fed dogs need to eat more omega-3s to provide a healthy anti-inflammatory balance.

Not surprisingly fish oil is what most people think of to give omega-3 fatty acids. But fish oil isn't an ideal choice.

Problems With Fish Oil

Fish oil is very unstable and its quality varies tremendously. And rancid fish oil is worse to eat than no fish oil at all. Fish oil that's already in kibble isn't fresh, so it can be harmful for your dog. So it's best to look for a kibble that doesn't contain any fish oil and then you can add a good omega-3 fatty acid supplement just before serving.

If you open a new bottle of fish oil and it smells strongly fishy ... take it back to the store. It's quite likely poorly distilled and already rancid. So, if you're using fish oil ... **buy a high quality product, keep it refrigerated**, and add it fresh to kibble immediately before serving.

Other downsides of fish oil are that ...

- It contains toxins
- It may contain radiation

- Fish oil production is depleting the oceans

So here are some better ways to supplement dog kibble with omega-3 fatty acids.

Green Lipped Mussels (Or Oil)

The main anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats your dog needs are EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), ETA (eicosatetraenoic acid) and DHA. And these are all both plentiful in green lipped mussel oil.

[Green lipped mussel oil \(https://thenaturaldogstore.com/products/four-leaf-rover-safe-sea\)](https://thenaturaldogstore.com/products/four-leaf-rover-safe-sea) is also more absorbable than fish oil, so your dog doesn't need as much. And green lipped mussels are sustainably farmed in pristine New Zealand waters. So they're safer for your dog ... and other ocean creatures who depend on fish for survival!

Or, if you prefer to give your dog whole fish ...

Sardines Or Other Oily Fish

Oily fish like sardines or herring can be a great way to give your dog some extra omega-3 fats. And canned fish are fine for this purpose. Buy skin-on, bone-in fish, packed in water, not oil ... and preferably without added salt.

#6 Avoid Harmful Kibble Ingredients

When you buy any dog food, it's important to become a label reader! Once you do, the list of ingredients on some foods may surprise you. Let's talk about some ingredients to avoid.

It's best to choose a food that's **free of artificial preservatives, corn, wheat, soy or dyes and legumes.**

Artificial Preservatives

You can **recognize artificial preservatives** by the names **BHA, BHT or ethoxyquin**. There are reports that BHA and BHT are carcinogenic. Ethoxyquin, a preservative and pesticide, can damage kidney tissue in rats. So avoid foods with these ingredients.

GMO Grains

Corn, soy and wheat are usually **genetically modified** (GMO) crops. One problem with GMO grains is that they're sprayed with pesticides like Roundup. So they'll be high in glyphosate, which the WHO says is a "probable carcinogen." And cancer isn't the only risk. Glyphosate has been linked to kidney and liver disease, gastrointestinal problems and seizures.

Legumes

You'll also want to avoid legumes (like peas, lentils, beans). These are often used in kibble as low-cost proteins. And they're in "grain-free" foods as a starchy substitute for grains.

Legume crops are sprayed with glyphosate to dry them just before harvesting ... so they're even higher in toxic residues than grains. Legumes are also high in lectins. These are substances that can interfere with digestion, contributing to **leaky gut syndrome, allergies and inflammatory bowel disease.**

RELATED: [Read about our dog food reviews ...](#)

(<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/dog-food-reviews/>).

Why Kibble Isn't Ideal

This isn't to make you feel guilty ... but before closing, here are a few reasons kibble isn't the best choice for your dog.

- **Kibble is very high in starch.** Dogs don't need starch in their diet at all. It's just what holds the kibble nuggets together! And it's cheaper for the manufacturers than meat or fresh produce.
- **Kibble is "dead" food.** That's because it's so highly processed and heated. Processing at high temperatures removes most of the nutrients from the food. So kibble manufacturers have to add synthetic vitamins and minerals to meet regulatory nutritional standards.
- **Kibble contains synthetic vitamins and minerals** aren't well absorbed by the body. And they can even be harmful long term. So if you do feed kibble, it's best to find one without synthetic nutrients.
- **Kibble can contain many toxins.** These may be carcinogens like heterocyclic amines and acrylamides caused by high heat and aflatoxin mold in grains or legumes. Or potentially carcinogenic herbicides like glyphosate. **Studies show glyphosate in kibble is up to 130 times the levels in commercial raw food.**

There are still thousands of pet owners who believe that kibble is a complete and balanced diet. But it's missing critical nutrients. That's why a fresh food diet is best. By following these 6 recommendations, you should notice a difference in your dog's health and energy levels.

RELATED: [How to get started with raw food ...](https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/raw-feeding-primer/)
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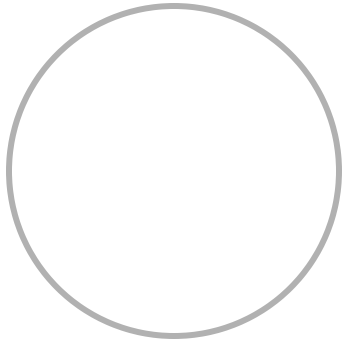
And if you do feed kibble, whatever the reason ... now you know how some boosters can help your dog and make dog kibble better!

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