A healthy diet is important for everyone, even your pets! When picking out the right food for your pet, there are important things to consider.

**Raw pet foods can make pets and people sick**

CDC does not recommend feeding raw diets to pets. Germs like *Salmonella* and *Listeria* bacteria have been found in raw pet foods, even packaged ones sold in stores. These germs can make your pets sick. Your family also can get sick by handling the raw food or by taking care of your pet.

**What about dry and canned pet food?**

Dry and canned pet food also can be contaminated with germs. Before making any changes to your pet’s diet, talk with your veterinarian.

**Tips to stay healthy while feeding your pet**

- Always wash your hands with soap and water right after handling pet food or treats; this is the most important step to prevent illness.
- When possible, store pet food and treats away from where human food is stored or prepared and away from reach of young children.
- Don’t use your pet’s feeding bowl to scoop food. Use a clean, dedicated scoop, spoon, or cup.
- Always follow any storage instructions on pet food bags or containers.

**If you decide to feed your pet raw food**

- Wash your hands and surfaces thoroughly after handling raw pet food.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water right after handling any raw pet food.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that the raw food touched, like countertops, microwaves, refrigerators and objects like knives, forks, and bowls.
- Freeze raw pet food until you are ready to use it.
- Keep raw pet food away from other food in your refrigerator or freezer.
- Don’t let your pet lick around your mouth and face after eating raw food.
- If you play with your pet after they have had raw food, wash your hands, and any other parts of your body they licked, with soap and water.
- If you feed your pet reptile or amphibian frozen or live rodents
  - Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling frozen or live feeder rodents.
  - Thaw frozen feeder rodents in a dedicated container out of the kitchen.
  - Never feed wild rodents to your pet.

**Children and pets**

- Young children are at risk for illness because their immune systems are still developing and because they are more likely than others to put their fingers or other items into their mouths.
- Children younger than 5 years old should not touch or eat pet food, treats, or supplements.
- Adults should supervise young children when washing hands.

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www.cdc.gov/features/pet-food-safety/