



Dear friends,

Welcome to our September Newsletter from [www.bestdoggietips.com](http://www.bestdoggietips.com). Our focus this month is on all natural dog health and nutrition. You'll find some great tips and recipes for holistic treatments and food for your dog. Plus a great story on some people who are doing their bit to help rehabilitate the reputation of pit bulls. And have you signed your pooch up to DoggySpace yet?? And as usual we've got a great recipe, and some heart warming stories in our weird & wonderful section. Enjoy!

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

*Dogs, bless them, operate on the premise that human beings are fragile and require incessant applications of affection and reassurance. The random lick of the hand, and the furry chin draped over the instep, are calculated to let the shaky owner know that a friend is nearby. – Mary McGrory.*

## Recipe - Chicken Stew

Now – I actually cook this for both my dog and cat, and they usually eat it out of each other's bowl - they both assume the other is getting something special!!

### *Ingredients*

500g chicken mince

1 cup water

1 tsp chicken stock

1 cup of boiled mashed pumpkin (approximately – I usually use ¼ pumpkin)

1 tbsp chicken gravy powder

### *To Make*

Place the chicken mince in a medium sized pot and add water. Mash through with a fork until all mince has been separated. There should be excess water in the pot. Add the spoonful of stock powder mixed with a little hot water and stir through.

Bring to the boil and cook for 12 – 15 minutes until cooked through (no more pink bits remaining). You may need to stir a couple of times.

Add the gravy powder and cook for a few more minutes until the sauce starts to thicken. If it looks too watery, you can add more gravy powder. Remove from the heat and stir through the cooked pumpkin.

Allow to cool before serving.

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## A Natural Diet for Your Dog

Dogs are omnivores – in the wild, they get their nutrients from raw meat, bone, sinew, offal, fermented vegetable matter in the gut of the carcasses they eat, as well as rotting fruit, berries, dung and leaf litter.

According to holistic veterinarians, a simple change from processed (tinned / dried) pet food to fresh and raw food can improve many chronic health problems in dogs. Skin conditions can improve within a month or so after changing to a fresh food diet with the correct balance of oils, omega 3 and fatty acids, trace elements and minerals.

Whilst some pets can live happily on commercial foods (those with a very efficient digestive system), if your pet is not 100% healthy, or you want to keep them 100% healthy, you may want to consider introducing raw and natural foods into your dogs diet.

So how do we do this?

Raw meat or offal switches on your dog's digestive system, so try to feed raw meat. If your dog is not accustomed to eating raw meat, try slightly browning just the outside of the meat to entice them with the smell. Just a word of warning – meat that looks very red may have been treated with a sulphur preservative. And avoid giving your dog animal fat – fat should constitute no more than 5% of their diet. This level will be found naturally – don't add any extra.

Raw bone and cartilage provides a source of calcium, as well as helping to clean your dogs teeth. Suitable raw bones include chicken wings, chicken necks, lamb shanks and any raw bone that doesn't splinter. Make sure the bone is appropriate to the size of your dog, and be careful of those shapes which may get caught in your dog's upper palate (such as lamb neck rosettes). Also, too frequent chewing on large bones can wear down a dog's teeth prematurely, so all things in moderation.

Heart, kidney, liver and tripe are offal readily available in most supermarkets or butchers and should be fed once a week.

Fish two or three times a week is a great source of omega 3 fatty acids for your dog. Try whitebait, tinned sardines, pilchards or salmon.

As noted earlier, calcium can be sourced from bones, but you can also feed your dog yoghurt and cheese (not full cream milk!), however these should be offered sparingly, and keep an eye on your pet's reaction. Some dog's don't tolerate lactose very well and get diarrhoea. It's also best to use low-fat varieties to reduce the risk of pancreatitis. Eggs are also fine for your dog – raw or cooked.

Most fruit and vegetables are OK for your dog, although some may cause wind. Fruits to avoid are grapes, raisins, the pips and kernels of all fruit, macadamia nuts and walnuts. Vegetables to avoid are anything from the onion family (garlic, onions, shallots, leeks, etc), mushrooms, tomatoes, and avocados.

Cereals are a good source of carbohydrates and can help bulk out a meal, but do not overuse. You can use cooked rice, oats, chickpeas, lentils, and split peas.

Some herbs can also be beneficial. A small pinch of turmeric added to the main meal can assist dogs with arthritis (turmeric is the main constituent of several well known anti inflammatory drugs for humans) or a small amount of dried or fresh ginger. Other Indian spices are also beneficial – those found in many curries – cumin, coriander and cayenne.

Ginger is also great as an anti nausea medication if your dog hates driving. I used to give my dog a Ginger Nut biscuit before a long drive, and it cut the incidence of vomiting greatly. Or you can add a small pinch of ginger or peppermint tea to their meal.

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## A Vegetarian Diet for Your Dog?

Whether it's a lifestyle choice, or a wish to feed your pet a healthier diet, the question remains whether a dog can thrive on a purely vegetarian diet.

According to Dr Matthew Miles from the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association "dogs can live on a vegetarian diet but cannot thrive on it".

However, James O'Heare, who is Director of the Vegan Dog Nutrition Association and holds a diploma of animal sciences, believes that dogs can live a healthy and active life on a vegan diet if the diet is properly balanced.

Protein deficiency can lead to anaemia, and dogs may become listless, however various studies have shown that soy protein, when combined with other protein sources that contain complementary amino acids, can provide dogs with a source of consistent and quality protein.

In a study run by Dr Wendy Brown and funded by the Australian Research Council a group of Siberian Huskies were used to demonstrate the nutritional adequacy of a meat free diet in active dogs.

Half the dogs were fed a commercially prepared meat based diet of rice, corn and poultry. In the meat-free group, the poultry was replaced with soybean meal and maize gluten. Over a 16 week period the dogs endured 2 weeks of pre-race training, 10 weeks of competitive racing, and then 4 weeks of recovery where training was reduced.

Vet examinations showed the dogs to be in excellent physical condition with no signs of anaemia. Brown says the overall results were pleasing and supported the idea that active dogs can thrive on a vegetarian diet.

However many veterinarians are unswayed. Many disagree with excluding meat from a dog's diet.

For more information on vegetarian and vegan diets for your dog, visit [www.vegepets.info](http://www.vegepets.info)

*(Before changing your dog's diet, please consult your vet for a full examination of your dog)*

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## Natural Remedies

Many vets are now leaning towards natural remedies for many dog ailments. Dogs can benefit greatly from the use of herbs, oils and homeopathic remedies, but it must be remembered that their sense of smell is very acute, so essential oils must be diluted before use.

Here are some recipes for natural remedies for some very common problems. However, these are not a substitute for veterinary advice – if your dog is unwell, take it to the vet!

### Arthritis Massage Oil

*½ cup vegetable oil*  
*8 drops rosemary oil*  
*8 drops of eucalyptus oil*  
*12 drops lavender oil*  
*8 drops ginger oil*

Mix together in a bottle and shake well. Get under the coat to the skin and massage the affected joints and the spine with log, firm but gentle movements. Don't worry if the dog licks some of the oil from its coat – it is not harmful.

### Tooth Powder for Dogs with Bad Breath

*¼ cup bicarb of soda*  
*2 tbsp salt*  
*1 drop myrrh oil*  
*1 drop peppermint oil*

Mix the bicarb of soda and the salt. Then mix the oils into the powder stirring constantly. Sieve if necessary to remove lumps. Dip a damp cotton wool ball or a very soft toothbrush into the mixture and gently clean the teeth and gums. Follow by offering a drink of water.

### Promote a Glossy Coat

*10 drops carrot oil*  
*10 drops evening primrose oil*  
*2 tbsp olive oil*  
*2 tbsp wheatgerm oil*

Mix together and store in a dark coloured bottle in the refrigerator. Add ¼ teaspoon of the mixture to each meal. Can be stored for up to 2 months. (Note: a dull coat may be a sign of an underlying illness – check with your vet).

## Flea Collar

*1 tsp lemon eucalyptus oil*  
*1 tsp cedarwood or pennyroyal oil*  
*1 tsp lemon tea tree oil*  
*4 garlic oil capsules pierced and squeezed into the formula*  
*1 tsp thyme oil*  
*1½ tbsp vodka*

Mix together in a small bottle and shake well to combine. Soak a cloth collar in 1-2 teaspoons of the blend and allow to dry before using. The flea collar will need to be re-treated every month in order to be effective, and may not be as effective on larger dogs as the fleas have a larger area to get away from the smell.

## Flea Carpet Powder

*2 cups bicarb of soda*  
*4 tbsp borax*  
*20 drops lavender oil*  
*20 drops lemon eucalyptus oil*  
*20 drops lemon tea tree oil*  
*20 drops cypress oil*

Mix the powders thoroughly and then drip the oils into the powder stirring constantly. Store in a jar or container. To use – sprinkle the powder onto the carpets at night and then vacuum the following day. Repeat every 2-3 days for 2 weeks, then once a week during flea season.

*(From Natural Remedies for Canines by Dr Nerys Purchon)*

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## Pit Bulls Get a BAD RAP

### Oakland couple rescues pit bulls and works to redeem breed's image

For Tim Racer and Donna Reynolds, the dog rescues started with an open-door policy.

Cruising around Chicago on winter nights, they pulled up beside bedraggled strays and swung open the car door. If the animal didn't skitter away, if it wasn't too beaten down to contemplate jumping inside, they figured, there was a chance to save it.



Often, their hearts got the best of them. They bolted from the car and chased down dogs of all shapes and sizes. Once they found a home for one animal, they'd soon spot another needy outcast. "There was this satisfying sense of justice," Racer recalled. "We knew those dogs should not be allowed to die."

Moving west, the two commercial artists focused their rescue efforts on American pit bull terriers, which they consider the nation's most misunderstood breed. In 1999, they formed Bay Area Doglovers Responsible About Pit Bulls, or **BAD RAP**, to help reverse the dogs' criminal image.

Now they've set their sights on the most vilified outcasts of all: fighting pit bulls taken from disgraced football star Michael Vick's Bad Newz Kennels.

Tim Racer works with Moose in Oakland, preparing the playful brown-and-white pit bull for adoption. One of his first steps: changing the dog's name to Jelly Roll Jones. Oakland's shelter gets an average of two dozen pit bulls each week.

In most dog-fighting busts, the animals are euthanized. But this time, a federal judge ordered Vick to pay for the dogs to be assessed individually by experts who would look past the breed's stereotype.

Working with a team from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and others, Racer and Reynolds evaluated 49 dogs.

What they found astounded them: Only one dog was put down because of its temperament. Twenty-two, deemed either unsocialized or dog-aggressive, were sent to the Best Friends animal sanctuary in Utah.

The rest were placed with families, including an attorney who wears a T-shirt proclaiming "My best

friend is a pit bull."

As part of the adoption effort, BAD RAP took 13 dogs back to Oakland. There was Teddles, Vick's white-and-gray trophy dog, and Hector, who still bears fighting scars on his chest and legs. And Jonny Justice, Zippy, Grace, Iggy and little Uba, many of them bearing the pit bull's signature physical traits: the broad face and brick-like head. The couple has so far found homes for 10 of the dogs.

Over the last decade, Racer and Reynolds have found homes for 400 pit bulls. They assist kennels nationwide in creating pit bull adoption programs and help new owners train their pets.

For the artists, natives of Detroit who met at the Center for Creative Studies there, the work is part of the mission to help restore a tarnished image. Just a few generations ago, they say, pit bulls were considered America's dog: The dogs helped sell bonds during World War I. And Petie the pit bull later became the mascot of "The Little Rascals," the popular children's TV show.

Now, thanks to perverse breeding and training, the animals are associated mostly with violence. They are by far the most commonly found breed in shelters nationwide, and hundreds of thousands are euthanized each year.

Racer and Reynolds say the dogs are chosen as fighters because of their athleticism and stamina. Many want nothing to do with fighting yet are still put down by authorities. "The Vick case is a milestone," said Reynolds, 46. "For once, these dogs were not destroyed, dismissed as ticking time bombs. They were seen for what they are -- as victims."

Despite successful rescue efforts, some animal experts say pit bulls are not for everyone. Abandoned pit bulls need to be evaluated before an adoption and, like most dogs, they need exercise and training. Though fiercely loyal to their owners, some can be aggressive.

"These dogs are athletic, determined and unbelievably, unnaturally strong," said Daphna Nachminovitch, vice president of cruelty investigations for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. "They may be friendly with people, but many are animal-aggressive. People need to know that going in."

Countered Reynolds: "One need only to look at the Vick dogs to see excellent examples of dogs breaking those exact stereotypes."

When Racer and Reynolds moved to Oakland in 1996, they bought their first house. And the first law of home ownership, they joked, was having their own dog.

Racer wanted a pit bull, something playful and clownish but with a sense of physical confidence. Not Reynolds. "All I knew I'd learned from the media -- that these were unpredictable, violent dogs. I thought, why would you want to own a pet like that?"

Then, at a local animal shelter, they found Sally, a 10-month-old pup they couldn't walk away from. They took her home, intending to adopt her out, but soon noticed something peculiar. "This was one

of the best dogs we'd ever known," Reynolds recalled. "Clearly, we had been lied to about pit bulls." They decided to keep Sally for themselves.

The couple also began scouring animal shelters for other pit bulls and launched a pit bull website, [www.badrap.org](http://www.badrap.org). Like many people consumed by a cause, they can't exactly explain why pit bull rescues have come to dominate their lives. Reynolds jokes that it might be a good topic for a therapist.

With so much of their time devoted to dog rescues, the couple struggled to find time to work as artists, Racer as a sculptor and carousel carver and Reynolds as a commercial illustrator. And funding for their new pet cause was so scant, they refinanced their home three times in the early years to keep the effort going.

But they couldn't stop. They searched local kennels for "breed ambassadors" that would make good pets and help change the pit bull image. Sometimes they saw abandoned fighting dogs in such pain it made them weep.

"But we're not bleeding hearts," said Racer, his deaf pit bull Honky Tonk snoring on his lap. "With animals we know will never be right with the world, we counsel shelters to put them down. We know we can't save them all."

Neither Racer nor Reynolds had heard of Michael Vick when authorities indicted the Atlanta Falcons quarterback in 2007 for running a covert dog fighting operation.

The news was grim: Dogs -- both those that failed in the ring and those that refused to fight -- were shot, drowned, beaten to death and even electrocuted on Vick's estate in rural Surrey County, Va. Others were left chained to car axles.

Some animal experts called for the surviving animals to be put down. "We don't regard euthanasia as the worst thing for dogs raised to mangle one another in a bloody pit," PETA's Nachminovitch said.

Reynolds saw things differently. She wrote to federal prosecutors, proposing that the animals be evaluated and that "any dogs that demonstrate stability and resiliency to their abuse be given the opportunity to serve as living examples -- mascots if you will -- to encourage the pet-loving public to stay vigilant against the crime of dog fighting."

Authorities agreed. Last Labor Day weekend, Racer and Reynolds helped evaluate 49 dogs spread across six Virginia shelters. They found many dogs in deplorable conditions. Marked as killers, they were kept in isolation with little human contact.

One by one, they approached each animal to gauge its sociability. Was the animal shut down? Was it aggressive?

Experts were impressed with Racer's connection with the creatures.

"There was Tim lying on his stomach to entice these dogs out of their cages," said Stephen L. Zawistowski, an executive vice president for the ASPCA. "We'd been told these were the nation's most dangerous dogs. I thought, wow, Tim is really putting his life on the line."

But the dogs surprised them. Many frightened animals had to be carried outside for testing, where they cowered in the grass, relaxing only in the presence of other dogs.

The hardest test came with the one dog that was eventually euthanized. "She wouldn't even let us into the pen," Reynolds recalled. "She'd had enough abuse. That was it for her."

Several other dog rescue groups nationwide got involved to find homes for the Vick dogs. One is now a therapy dog in Palo Alto. "The majority of the Vick dogs did not need rehabilitation; they just needed to be rescued from that negative element," Racer said.

Huss, the dogs' legal guardian, said Racer's tour of the kennels where the Vick dogs were housed convinced her that authorities were doing the right thing: "Tim helped me see the value in these animals."

Moose the pit bull stepped out of the Oakland animal shelter with a weightlifter's stride. But once inside the fenced-in field, the brown-and-white dog was all playful puppy. "You're a good boy, yes you are," Racer said, rubbing his belly. "You're going to make somebody very happy."

Racer and Reynolds are helping the city shelter launch a program to find homes for the two dozen pit bulls left there each week. Like many, Moose has a mysterious past. But Racer thinks of the future.

Moose is getting a pit bull makeover. For starters, his name has been changed to Jelly Roll Jones, something whimsical and artistic.

But it's not just the dogs; owners also need image polishing, Racer said. "We're trying to show that even 90-pound women can own a dog like this -- nurses, teachers. Not just tough guys."

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## DoggySpace - MySpace for dogs

There's a new kid in town taking on the big guns of Facebook and MySpace – it's the canine equivalent — Doggyspace.com.

A crossbreed between MySpace and YouTube, Doggyspace allows dog owners from all over the world to come together, create profiles, and share photos and videos of their pups.

The Virginia-based site is part of a growing trend of niche, or content-focused, social networking sites that target interest groups looking to connect with like-minded people.

Since launching in mid-July, Doggyspace has logged more than 700 registered, active user profiles — 73 percent of them created by females, said Levi Thornton, founder of the site and president of web development firm Mad Frog Productions in Fredericksburg, Va. He projects that Doggyspace will have more than two million accounts by the end of the year.

"There's a lot of people out there with their dogs and we're busy and we're all working in the office all day long and this is a way for us to bring our pets with us," said Thornton, who has a Yorkie named Nokie and a pit bull named Ein.

Standard accounts for the site are free, but later this year Doggyspace plans to offer premium accounts for a small fee that will give users extra features. A portion of that fee will go to an animal charity of the members' choice.

Thornton, 30, said the site is a place for pet owners to share stories or learn about a specific breed. It can also help people form friendships based on a love of dogs, or connect people interested in finding a play date for their dog.

Connie Mandrozios found the site while searching for information for her 12-year-old golden retriever, Boomer, who has cancer. She received an outpouring of support from other dog owners with similar experiences and some told her they "have their paws crossed" for Boomer.

Mandrozios, 36, ended up spending more time on the site, creating profiles for Boomer as well as his "sisters" — a pit bull mix named Darla and another mixed breed named Violet.

"It's been a goofy thing to do at the end of the day when you get home from work and you just want to talk to somebody in your dog's voice and say, 'hey, how was your day? Woof,'" said Mandrozios, who lives in Bridgeport, Conn. and sometimes uses her dogs in her job as a behaviourist.

Most of the Doggyspace profiles include messages from other doggy "friends."

One profile is for a chocolate Labrador retriever named Guinness, who said her mom "couldn't resist naming me after her favourite beverage" and said she is shy around other dogs and scared of small, furry creatures because she lives with a "VERY MEAN CAT."

Postings on Guinness' profile include a message from Chico, a Chihuahua mix who offered to help with the shyness problem.

Dominique Cecchetti, a 20-year-old student from Pittsburgh, created a profile to share photos of her 12-year-old Maltese named Darren, who has more than 125 friends on the site.

For Cecchetti and other users, the site is very much a dog and owner effort: "My dog sits near the computer while I do the work for him," Cecchetti said in an e-mail.

(PS – BestDoggieTips favourite pooch – Hamish McPup – now has his own DoggySpace page).

You can find Doggyspace at [www.doggyspace.com](http://www.doggyspace.com)

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## The Weird & the Wonderful

### Town sniffs out dog as shoe thief

*Associated Press*

WAVELAND, Ind. - Residents of a small Indiana town believe a stray dog is behind a rash of shoe thefts.

Shoes left outdoors in the Montgomery County community of Waveland began disappearing one by one in June, reappearing near the town's fire station.

Acting town marshal Rob Kiger and others have seen a stray brown and white dog, possibly a beagle, around town carrying a shoe in its mouth. Others have seen the dog lying in the sun near the fire station.

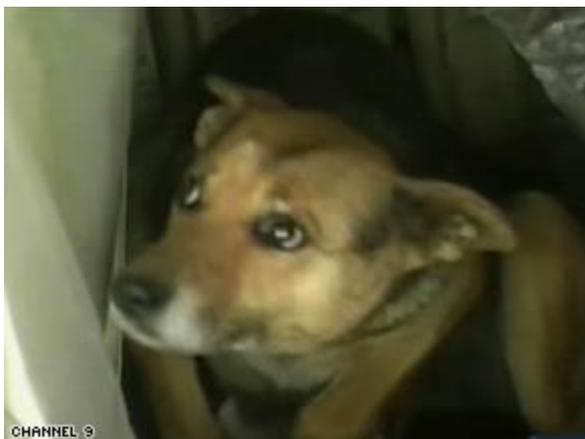
Susie Calvert, who works near the fire station, says she finds shoes in the area and places them on the ledge at the station, hoping that the owners will collect them.

Kiger says he's tried to take the canine shoe bandit into custody, but it runs away every time he gets close.

### Dog protected abandoned newborn, doctors say

**(CNN)**

A dog sheltered a newborn baby abandoned by its 14-year-old mother in a field in rural Argentina until the boy was rescued, a doctor said Friday.



The abandoned infant was found in a field with this dog and her newborn puppies.

A resident of a rural area outside La Plata called police late Wednesday night to say that he had heard the baby crying in a field behind his house.

The man went outside and found the infant lying beside the dog and its six newborn puppies, said Daniel Salcedo, chief of police of the Province of Buenos Aires.

The temperature was a chilly 37 degrees, Salcedo said.

The dog had apparently carried the baby 50 meters from where his mother had abandoned him to where the puppies were huddled, police said.

"She took it like a puppy and rescued it," Salcedo said. "The doctors told us if she hadn't done this, he would have died.

"The dog is a hero to us."

Dr. Egidio Melia, director of the Melchor Romero Hospital in La Plata, said police showed up at the hospital at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday with the baby, who doctors say was only a few hours old.

Though the infant had superficial scratches and bruises and was bleeding from his mouth, he was in good shape, Melia said.

The next morning, the child's mother was driven by a neighbor to the hospital and told authorities that the 8-pound, 13-ounce infant is hers, Melia said. The teenager was immediately given psychological treatment and was hospitalized, he said. She has said little about the incident. The child has been transferred to a children's hospital in La Plata, 37 miles from Buenos Aires.

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Animals are crapping in our houses! And we're picking it up! Did we lose a war? *—Homer Simpson.*