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The Salmonella Myth

Salmonella is, together with Rabies, a very unique disease: it can affect both humans and dogs! No other known diseases can do that. Unfortunately, this leads many people to fear Salmonella infections from their dogs, and veterinarians and pet food manufacturers alike are quick to support this fear, regardless the risk being utterly negligible.

How dangerous is Salmonella?

First thing to do is to get a serious understanding of what Salmonella is and how dangerous it is to humans.

Salmonella is a bacterium that can cause some unpleasant reactions in our gastrointestinal system, like vomiting and diarrhea, and often also fever. The attack might last about a week. From the US Center for Disease Control and the US Center for Health Statistics, you can find that, out of 1.43 million *reported* cases over the two years 2001-2002 in the USA, 585 died, almost all them being infants and people over 91. About 556 of those infections are known to be caused by *food*, not pets. That leaves a maximum of 29 to *possibly* be caused by infections coming from dogs and all other non-food sources... Considering the USA's population of 293,000,000, Americans thus have a risk of about 0.25% per year of getting infected with Salmonella, and 0.05 ppm (ppm="parts per million") of dying of a Salmonella infection! Compare that to a yearly risk of 108 ppm for a man (33 ppm for a woman) in the USA to get murdered, about 100 ppm for getting killed in traffic, and 11 ppm for a person less than 91 years old to die of Influenza or Pneumonia.

Add to this that there has been research done showing that dogs do not carry Salmonella in their saliva or on their skin, not even after eating 100% Salmonella infected raw food! But, when they do eat Salmonella infected food, about one third of them will show a moderate concentration of Salmonella in their feces – yet no clinical signs of being sick.

This means that *the only way* those 29 Salmonella deaths in 2001 and 2002 possibly could have been originating from infection through dogs would be that the people had eaten dog poop from an infected dog... (You can make your own guess at how many of the 29 actually did that!)

The commercial scaremonger

Nevertheless, you will repeatedly find articles and posts, online and offline, typically sponsored by pet food manufacturers or veterinary association, about the dangers of Salmonella.

Well, given the facts above, it does not make sense from a point of view that is dictated by health concerns. The risk is ridiculously small, if not outright ludicrous to worry about...

But it makes a lot of sense when you consider the commercial aspects of it...

You get a serious perspective of the size of the "Salmonella problem" when you consider that the Canadian government a couple of years ago published that an estimated 80-85% of all chicken in North American supermarkets (approved for being sold to consumers!) was in fact infected with Salmonella. When I, back in 2000, phoned the US FDA to get this confirmed, I did indeed get it confirmed... So, it is a "general problem", not just in Canada!

As mentioned, raw fed dogs have been show to have a generally higher chance of showing Salmonella in their poop than dogs fed sterile kibble full of poisonous chemicals (called "preservatives" in order to kill all kinds of micro-organisms). No surprise... something would have been seriously wrong with fundamental biology and chemistry if this were not the case!!! (Actually, it might be surprising that only a third of the dogs fed Salmonella contaminated chicken showed Salmonella in their feces – it shows how effective the dog's stomach is at killing such infections!)

So, if Salmonella seriously were problem for the public health, then why should it concern us that 30% of all dog poop is infected, when it is acceptable to have 80-85% of all edible chicken infected? Which source would be the greater danger for healthy people?

There is only one conclusion: SALMONELLA IS NOT A SERIOUS HEALTH CONCERN FOR OUR GOVERNMENTS! And it shouldn't be.

Now, why are pet food manufacturers (and vets paid by them) then financing studies to the effect of showing the link between raw food and Salmonella in poop?

There is, of course, only one answer: *money*.

How scaremonger can be turned into profit

The trick is to see *how* the leading pet food manufacturers can make money on this.

This way: many of them published many "scientific articles" online that point out all kinds of dangers of raw feeding. Why? Because they are seriously concerned about the loss of what in the past was an obvious market they could control! I am no longer alone about advocating [raw food for dogs](#) - and the raw-food advocates spread the words about what makes sense. We are a serious threat to their long-term profits, if not to their existence! If everybody fed raw, there would be no Purina or Iams or Alpo: belly up! Shareholders counting their losses....

The pet food manufacturers already know that people are scared of Salmonella, because it is the only canine disease (except for the extremely rare Rabies) that also affects humans. We have been blown full of this scare of bad hygiene and "dangerous bugs" since childhood. The more it is being published as "something bad" (note: without specifying exactly *how bad*, so we could make our own judgments!), the bigger the chance of it being ingrained in our subconscious minds!

Hitler's propaganda minister in Nazi-Germany (Göbbels) once said: "If you tell a lie often enough, people will believe it is the truth".

There you go! Tell the lie often enough - and you make people believe that Salmonella is dangerous!

Now the pet food manufacturers cannot really do this without some caution. They are smart enough to not want to get a lawsuit on their neck for spreading outright false information.

And they do not have to. All they have to do is to create yet another opportunity for them to publish that there is a link between "raw food" and "Salmonella". Then people will automatically (because of their subconscious fear of bacteria that can case humans to get ill) feel uncomfortable about the raw food - because we connect it with "bacteria", and "bacteria" is already ingrained in our brains as something "bad". We may not be aware of it - but that's the way it *does* work! The media play on this all the time! This way, the pet food industry can play on the average consumer's subconscious mind and (that's what they hope) turn the tide so that more people will be reluctant to shift to raw - and maybe some raw feeders will get scared enough to come back to their comfortable "care"!

Remember, consumers do *not* make decisions with their logic. They make buying decisions with their *emotions* - and then use logic afterwards to justify their choices. All well-educated marketers know this, the leading pet food manufacturer's staff most definitely included.

All it takes to get the average consumer to not listen to raw-food promotion is such creation (or support) of an emotional block, put there by someone who confirmed again and again that "raw" is linked to "Salmonella", and "Salmonella" is stored in our brains in the drawer for "bad stuff" we should avoid. End result: the consumer will avoid raw food because of this emotional connection, created by smart marketers and media people!

This strategy is very well thought out. Using our subconscious minds to make purchase decisions is far more effective than using logic. These corporate businesses don't want us to use logic. They just want us to buy their products, no matter our reasons! And they know well that we buy with our emotions.

Yes, it is manipulation. It is in fact the same as brainwashing... If we are not very, very careful, it will catch us. It works on the subconscious level of our minds, so we do not need to be aware of this in order for it to work in favour of the big corporations. In fact, it works best for them if we are *not* aware of it....

But that's why it is so darn important to call this bluff.

Mogens Eliassen

Mogens Eliassen holds a mag. scient. degree (comparable to a US Ph. D.) in Chemistry from Århus University, Denmark and has 30+ years of experience working with dogs, dog owners, dog trainers, and holistic veterinarians as a coach, lecturer, and education system developer. He is the author of several unique books about dogs and responsible care of dogs, available from www.k9joy.com. He publishes a newsletter "[The Peeing Post](#)" containing lots of tips and advice on dog problems of all kinds, particularly about training, behavioral problems, feeding, and health care.

For more information about Mogens Eliassen, including links to other articles he has published, please send a short e-mail to contact@k9joy.com.