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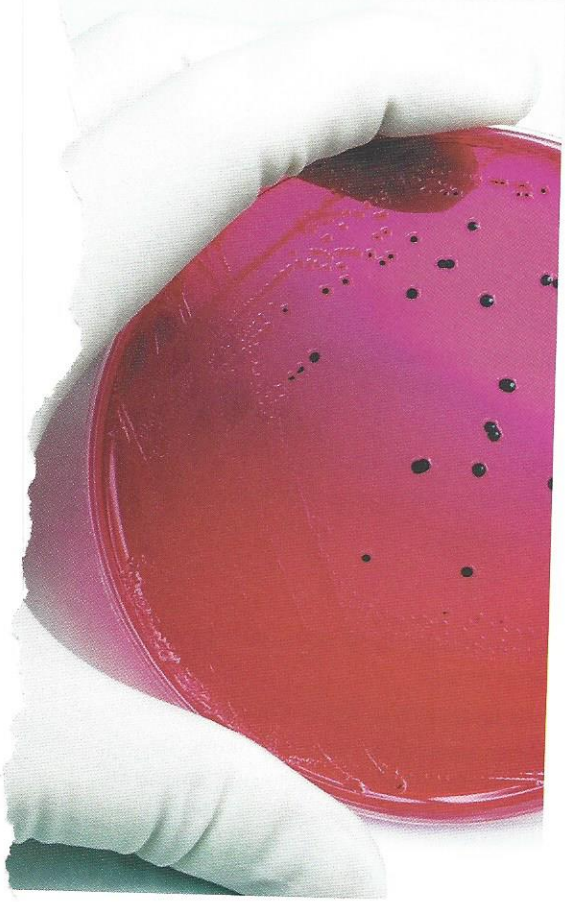


FDA warns about health risks of raw diets for pets and owners

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is warning pet owners about the risks of feeding raw foods to pets after its 2-year study demonstrated a heightened risk of food-borne illness in raw pet food products.

During the second year of the study, the FDA analyzed 196 samples of commercially available raw dog and cat food. Most of the products tested were frozen in tube-like packages and made from ground meat or sausage, the FDA said.

According to the agency, 15 of the products tested positive for *Salmonella*, and 32 tested positive for the pathogen *Listeria monocytogenes*. Overall, the study indicated that owners who feed their pet a raw diet may face a higher risk of infection from *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes*, the FDA concluded in its message to pet owners.

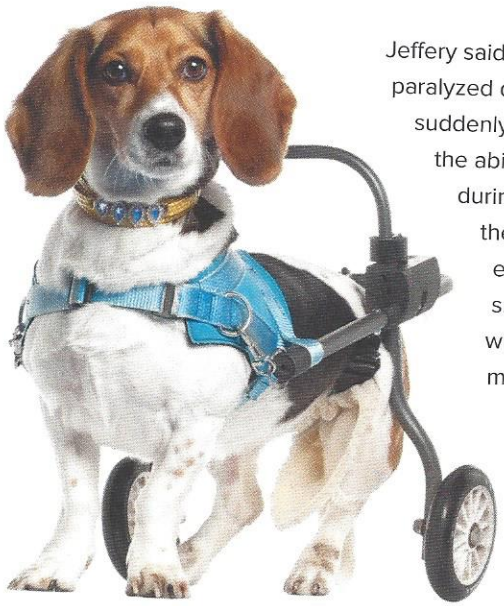
Renate Reimschuessel, of the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine, commented that the study "identified a potential health risk for the pets eating the raw food, and for the owners handling the food."

Iowa State researchers trying new treatments for spinal cord injuries in dogs, humans

Research taking place at the Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center of Iowa State University (ISU) holds the potential to improve the lives of dogs and humans who have suffered spinal injuries.

Nick Jeffery, professor of neurology and neurosurgery in the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine, is testing two different experimental approaches to treating spinal injuries, the school reported.

In the first method, Jeffery cultures cells that connect a dog's brain to its nose and then transfers those cells to the spinal cord. In the second, he is observing how the enzyme chondroitinase breaks down scar tissue when injected into a paralyzed dog's spinal cord.



Jeffery said that although paralyzed dogs haven't suddenly regained the ability to walk during his studies, they have often experienced a smoother and wider range of motion following treatment. A few of the dogs have displayed dramatic improvements, the school reported.

Jeffery said he is optimistic that the studies could potentially lead to new options for dogs with spinal injuries, as well as advance knowledge about future human treatments.

"Lab conditions aren't always useful for a good understanding of human clinical injuries," he said. "But some of what we see in dogs is a step closer to how humans may respond to new treatments."