

# Mad Cow Disease Q & A

## What is Mad Cow Disease?

Mad Cow, or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), is a disease that affects cows. There are other versions of this disease that affect other species. In sheep, it is called Scrapie. In deer, it is called Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). And in humans, it is called variant Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease. A broader term is Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy, or TSE. Transmissible meaning infected prions (proteinacious infectious particles) -- the miniscule proteins responsible for the disease -- can cross species barriers. In other words, the same disease can make different kinds of animals sick. (See Reference 4)

## What causes Mad Cow Disease?

So far, what scientists have discovered is that cows get BSE from eating infected meat or body parts from other cows (or sheep). Of course it is not normal or natural for a cow to eat another cow. After all, they are not cannibals! But sadly, many cows destined for slaughter are not given a choice of what to eat. Due to modern day practices of making animal feeds out of cheap and plentiful ingredients, typical cattle feeds do indeed contain ground up parts from other cows and sheep. It qualifies as a protein source in these feeds. (See Reference 2)

## Can my dog or cat catch this disease?

The jury is out on this issue. Some sources say dogs can't get it, while others indicate cases have been found in cats. (See Reference 1) Thinking about this question logically, if cows, sheep, deer and people have been known to contract this fatal disease, it seems that our dogs and cats may be just as susceptible. TSEs do cross species-barriers. There is no treatment or cure for this fatal disease.

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## Is Aunt Jeni's Home Made food safe?

Since we use Lamb, Beef and Goat that are grass-fed and not given any grains at all, their meat should be free of the TSE organisms. In addition, we do not use any brains or spinal cord material, or any of the tissues or bones surrounding those areas. None of the meats used in any of our recipes is given hormones, antibiotics, or grains. Each of the meats is USDA inspected and deemed fit for human consumption. These meats are far safer choices for your pets than feeding a dry, commercial food. Dry foods are made using products from the rendering plant, which is where diseased animal parts are sent in order to get them out of the human food supply. No amount of heating or processing can destroy the prions responsible for causing Mad Cow. Any rendered product should be avoided to keep your pets safe from this disease.

References:

1. [http://www.cm-d.com/buckeye/tech\\_manual/8\\_12.html](http://www.cm-d.com/buckeye/tech_manual/8_12.html) Mad Cow Disease, Are Our Pets In Danger? (Note: this article was written in 1996.)
2. [http://www.emagazine.com/july-august\\_1996/0796feat2.html](http://www.emagazine.com/july-august_1996/0796feat2.html) Mad Cows and the Colonies It Can't Happen Here? Don't Bet on It. U.S. Farmers are Still Practicing "Cow Cannibalism" Years After Britain Gave it Up
3. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/bse/en/> World Health Organization website on BSE
4. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28919-2003Dec24.html> Mysterious Proteins to Blame

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