

# Game Changer Turns Pet Parents Into Nutrition Superheroes

Game changer Monica Gonzalez Tovar is a certified veterinary technician and raw dog food nutrition specialist whose passion is spreading the word about simple, wholesome pet nutrition throughout Spain and all of Latin America.

**Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker**

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Today's Pet Game Changer is Monica Gonzalez Tovar, a certified veterinary technician in Spain and a raw dog food specialist and advocate
- Monica combines her passion for nutrition and teaching to empower pet parents and veterinarians in Spain and other Latin American countries to improve the diets of animal companions
- Monica overcomes the fear many people have of changing their pet's diet with simple nutritional principles and step-by-step guidance

Today's Pet Game Changer is Monica Gonzalez Tovar, who was nominated by Belén M. Monica is a certified veterinary technician in Spain and a raw dog food nutrition specialist. She's certified in Veterinary Dietetics and Nutrition (in Spain), has taken several Royal Animal Health University courses, and is a member of the U.K.-based Raw Feeding Veterinary Society. In addition, she completed four of five years of veterinary school.

## Empowering Pet Parents Toward Simple Solutions

I asked Monica how she learned about the importance of food and developed her passion for pet nutrition.

*"Well, it is a passion, as you say," she answered. "It started with my dog Keller, who is 13 years old now. I got her as a little puppy and the first year of her life was miserable. She vomited and had diarrhea all the time.*

*She also had a problem with a front leg and limped. So, I kept changing kibble, and then one day, I grabbed a handful of a very expensive brand, put it in her bowl, and my hand was really greasy from the food. And I thought, 'This is not right.'*

*I decided to do some research. Thirteen years ago, there wasn't much available, but thankfully I was able to read English. I found out about Dr. Ian Billinghurst. I read his books, and I learned about the importance of food.*

*I started remembering all my dogs in Venezuela and the diseases they developed, and I realized it had to do with their diets. As soon as I changed Keller's diet she improved. Everything improved. She just started limping again about two months ago, but she hadn't limped in 13 years. She's in beautiful health."*

Monica really wanted to share what she had learned with other dog parents, so she decided to create a Facebook group for BARF rookies (BARF = Biologically Appropriate Raw Food and/or Bones and Raw Food) that would be welcoming, compassionate and informative. No question was "stupid," and no question could be asked and answered too many times.

*"So, then the next step was I approached Dr. Billinghurst," Monica continued. "I sent him an email and said, 'I want to translate your book,' because Spanish speakers need to learn about these things from knowledgeable sources. So, I translated his book and brought it to Spain."*

Monica knew that what holds many people back from making a needed change is fear, and when it comes to changing a pet's diet — especially when the change is dramatic, like going from kibble to raw food — it can be very challenging. Her goal is to empower pet parents to make simple, commonsense changes that help them overcome their fear and learn more about the right nutrition for their animal companions.

## **Positive Nutritional Changes Don't Often Manifest Overnight**

I asked Monica how she ultimately became a nutrition consultant for pet parents.

*"It was completely natural," she replied. "After I created the Facebook group, I started a blog, and then I decided to develop just a basic course in feeding raw diets to dogs. I thought, 'I'm going to do a very short course, very basic so people can get started.' From there, I started doing consultations.*

*The response has been beautiful. And the change in the dogs is incredible. Especially the difficult cases, the dogs with a lot of gut problems, food intolerances and all those things. It's amazing how some of them, not all of them, of course, but some of them can be resolved so quickly.*

*I always say to people, 'I'm going to walk you through this. We're going to do this. Your dog's problem could be resolved in a week and it could be resolved in six months or in a year. It's going to depend on your pet's body and a lot of factors you can't predict. I just ask you to be patient.'*

*A man called me with a six-month-old puppy who'd never passed a solid stool. We started with bone broth and a protocol I use, and the very next day the guy's like, 'Listen, I don't want to get too excited, but my dog had his first solid poop. And I'm like, 'That's great! Let's not get too excited yet, but let's keep going.' The dog's problem was resolved for good the next day. It's great when things like that happen."*

When we get instantaneous improvement like that, it feeds our soul. I tell my clients that I can't predict when their dog or cat is going to respond. But since we have to nourish them anyway, we might as well nourish them in a way that restores and rebuilds their gut biome and detoxifies the body. It may take a week, a month, or a year to see improvement. And most people understand that.

## You Can Be Your Pet's Superhero

I asked Monica whether veterinarians in her part of the world are more receptive than U.S. vets have been to fresh and raw diets for pets.

*"I work with people in Spain and other countries in Latin America, and I can tell you that the veterinary interest in Latin America is amazing," she explained. "I have a lot of vets taking my courses.*

*They know I'm officially a vet tech, not a vet, and they take my courses. They have an open mind. In Spain, it's more pet guardians than vets. And it's interesting, most of my clients and others who take my courses are 30 and up. It's not younger people."*

Next, as I do with all my Game Changers, I asked Monica what she looks forward to most when she wakes up in the morning.

*"Oh, to be honest, what I love most is working with people's fears and taking them away," she answered. "I talk a lot about what the marketing of big pet food companies has done to us. I love to take complex subjects and turn them into simple information. It's really funny — one of my YouTube videos is really bad. It was one of my first videos, done five years ago. I was pregnant, and it was horrible.*

*The sound is bad, everything about it is bad. People even leave comments about the bad sound! But in that video, I explain percentages using a board I write on, and it now has 200,000 or so views, because people need the information no matter how bad the video is! That fills my heart."*

Monica is filling in information gaps for people. She's answering their questions, easing their fears, and making the information they need both accessible and doable. She's empowering people to take on the challenge to improve their pets' nutrition. Finally, I asked Monica what one thing she would like the world to know.

*"It's something funny that I often say, and it's that you can be a superhero," she replied. "You can be your dog's or your cat's superhero. We have amazing power over everything about our pets.*

*We decide when they go out, for how long and where, when they eat, what they eat, where they sleep, when they pee and poo. Everything about their lives is in our hands, and that is a big responsibility. So, I think one of the things that is the easiest, and has tremendous, enormous importance, is diet.*

*If I help you make it easy, if I help you organize it so that it's simple and it's easy, then you can have this tremendous effect, beautiful, amazing effect on your dog's or your cat's health. We can do so many things, like self-selection, for example. That's a little nugget of freedom we can give them. By the way, I learned that from Dr. Isla Fishburn, and we should nominate her a Game Changer award!"*

If you'd like to learn more about Monica and the courses and information she offers, you can find her website at **[Mónica González Tovar](#)**. She's always learning new things and updating her website content. You can also find her on **[Facebook](#)**.