

Feeding Cats



Pequot Lakes Animal Hospital
(218)568-5095

The Bottom Line

Cats are carnivores

Cats on dry diets are chronically dehydrated

Obesity is the number one health problem in cats

Cats- A Different Species

The problem with most dry cat foods:

1. Most dry foods contain 30-60% carbohydrates. Cats are true carnivores; their body's enzymes are primed and ready for **meats** while carbohydrates have never been a proven feline dietary requirement.
2. Dry food contributes to chronic dehydration. In the wild, cats depend on their food to provide needed water. It is unnatural for a cat to drink enough water to truly support their body's needs. In fact, many of the most commonly treated diseases in cats (kidney deficiency, bladder stones, lower urinary tract inflammation) are first treated by

increasing water intake i.e. feeding canned or moist foods.

3. Dry food contributes to obesity. Obesity is the number one health problem for cats and a major contributor to other health problems (diabetes, heart disease, cancer). Many people tend to 'free feed' cats, allowing them to become dry food grazers. In essence this amounts to turning a true carnivore that, in the wild would feed on small, high protein meals throughout the day, into a herbivore which grazes (and fattens up) on carbohydrates all day.

The Solution

What to feed

High protein, low carbs

Canned or moist foods

Measured meals

The good news is that, as demand for quality foods has risen, more options for cats have become available. However, cats can be stubborn and finicky- so diet changes often need to be made slowly and carefully, as serious health problems can result when a cat refuses to eat anything.

Cats fed by leaving dry food out all the time must first be switched to meal feedings. Our staff can give you tips on how to do this and how much food should be fed at meal time.

Secondly, start introducing a more premium food that is ideally, high in protein and grain-free (see brand recommendations). Begin by mixing the new food into the old food in small amounts then, gradually increase the new food as the cat will allow.

Lastly, try introducing your cat to some high quality canned or raw food diets. Try several flavors and textures and try multiple times. Begin with small amounts.

The advantages to a healthy diet and healthy eating habits are numerous. It will not only make your cat look and feel great but contributes to a longer lifespan with fewer health problems (and health costs) overall.

Foods We Recommend



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The Bottom Line

Good nutrition is essential to good health

Cheap ingredients make a cheap diet

The better the food the more digestible

Healthy Food, Healthy Pets

Optimum health begins with a wholesome, healthy diet. For humans, it is well recognized that proper diet can help us lead longer, healthier lives; why should it be different for our pets?

First, keep in mind no one food is best for every dog or cat. Each individual pet has their own specific needs whether it depend on their life stage, activity level or any special medical considerations. However, what *is* similar for all pets is that a healthy diet made with high quality ingredients will benefit them.

Feed the best food you can afford to feed. In general, more expensive diets contain better quality ingredients. Ingredients such as corn gluten meal, wheat or soybean are not only cheap but less digestible.

Unfortunately, cheap foods also often contain more sugar, salt and artificial flavor- additives that pets love. Yet, this is like feeding junk food to children every day. They may love it- but it isn't healthy!

Compare the labels. Look for food with a variety of quality protein sources like chicken, beef, lamb and fish. These ingredients have a high percentage of protein in the form of digestible, usable amino acids. Not only are they better for your pet, you can feed less due to their higher concentration of nutrition. This often means that on a per-serving basis, economy foods with cheaper ingredients cost the same or more than more premium diets.

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Raw Food

The benefits of raw food are diverse and plentiful. It is a highly bioavailable source of natural proportions of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, proteins and amino acids that promote healthy skin and coat, digestive health, support the immune system and improve energy.

Home-prepared diets can be great source of raw natural food for your pet IF they are properly balanced. It is recommended that you work with a nutritionist and follow a published recipe if your pet eats all home-prepared food.

An easy way to feed a raw diet is to purchase one that is pre-formulated as a complete and balanced diet such as Nature's Variety Raw Frozen Diets. This can then be fed alone or added to more processed forms of food such as dehydrated raw diets, dry kibble or canned food.

Label Comparisons- Ingredient Lists

Nature's Variety® Raw Frozen Diet Chicken Formula

Chicken, Raw Ground Chicken Bone, Turkey, Turkey Liver, Turkey Heart, Apples, Carrots, Butternut Squash, Ground Flaxseed, Chicken Eggs, Broccoli, Lettuce, Spinach, Dried Kelp, Apple Cider Vinegar, Parsley, Honey, Salmon Oil, Olive Oil, Blueberries, Alfalfa Sprouts, Persimmons, Duck Eggs, Pheasant Eggs, Quail Eggs, Inulin, Rosemary, Sage, Clove.

Nature's Variety Instinct® Chicken Meal Formula

Chicken Meal, Chicken Fat, Tapioca, Salmon Meal, Natural Chicken Flavor, Pumpkinseeds, Sun-Cured Alfalfa Meal, Montmorillonite Clay, Vitamins (Choline Chloride, Vitamin E Supplement, Ascorbic Acid, Biotin, Niacin Supplement, Vitamin A Acetate, d-Calcium Pantothenate, Riboflavin Supplement, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Thiamine Mononitrate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Carotene, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Folic Acid), Minerals (Zinc Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Copper Proteinate, Sodium Selenite, Ethylenediamine Dihydriodide), Sea Salt, Dried Kelp, DL-Methionine, Taurine, Direct-Fed Microorganisms (Saccharomyces Cerevisiae Yeast Culture, Dried Enterococcus Faecium Fermentation Product, Dried Lactobacillus Acidophilus Fermentation Product, Dried Aspergillus Niger Fermentation Extract, Dried Trichoderma Longibrachiatum Fermentation Extract, Dried Bacillus Subtilis Fermentation Extract), Inulin, Flaxseed Oil, Mixed Tocopherols with Citric Acid (a natural preservative), Rosemary Extract, Apples, Chicken Eggs, Cottage Cheese, Cranberries, Freeze Dried Chicken, Freeze Dried Turkey, Freeze Dried Turkey Liver, Freeze Dried Turkey Heart, Ground Chicken Bone, Carrots, Butternut Squash, Broccoli, Lettuce, Spinach, Salmon Oil, Apple Cider Vinegar, Parsley, Honey, Blueberries, Alfalfa Sprouts, Persimmons, Olive Oil, Duck Eggs, Pheasant Eggs, Quail Eggs, Rosemary, Sage, Clove.

Wellness® Deboned Chicken, Chicken Meal & Rice Recipe

Deboned Chicken, Chicken Meal, Rice, Ground Barley, Ground Rice, Chicken Fat(preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a natural source of Vitamin E), Natural Chicken Flavor, Salmon Meal, Chicken Liver, Cranberries, Tomato Pomace, Olive Oil, Chicory Root Extract, Cranberry Extract Powder, Cranberry Fiber, Flaxseed, Potassium Chloride, Vitamins (Vitamin E Supplement, Niacin, Ascorbic Acid (Vitamin C), Thiamine Mononitrate, Calcium Pantothenate, Riboflavin, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Beta-Carotene, Vitamin A Supplement, Vitamin D-3 Supplement, Folic Acid, Biotin, Vitamin B-12 Supplement), Choline Chloride, Minerals (Zinc Proteinate, Zinc Sulfate, Iron Proteinate, Ferrous Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Copper Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, Manganese Sulfate, Calcium Iodate, Sodium Selenite), Yucca Schidigera Extract, Dried Kelp, Chondroitin Sulfate, Glucosamine, Hydrochloride, Lactobacillus Plantarum, Enterococcus Faecium, Lactobacillus Casei, Lactobacillus Acidophilus, Taurine, Rosemary Extract.

Chicken Soup for the Cat Lover's Soul® Adult Cat Formula

Chicken, chicken meal, cracked pearled barley, chicken fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols), ocean fish meal, white rice, potatoes, oatmeal, millet, natural chicken

flavor, salmon, turkey, duck, flaxseed, sodium bisulfate, egg product, methionine, potassium chloride, choline chloride, dried chicory root, taurine, kelp, carrots, peas, apples, tomatoes, blueberries, spinach, dried skim milk, cranberry powder, rosemary extract, parsley flake, yucca schidigera extract, L-carnitine, dried fermentation products of Enterococcus faecium, Lactobacillus acidophilus, Lactobacillus casei and Lactobacillus plantarum, dried Trichoderma longibrachiatum fermentation extract, zinc proteinate, vitamin E supplement, niacin, manganese proteinate, copper proteinate, zinc sulfate, manganese sulfate, copper sulfate, thiamine mononitrate, vitamin A supplement, biotin, potassium iodide, calcium pantothenate, riboflavin, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), vitamin B12 supplement, manganous oxide, sodium selenite, vitamin D supplement, folic acid.

Purina One® SmartBlend™ Chicken & Rice Formula

Chicken, brewers rice, corn gluten meal, poultry by-product meal, wheat flour, animal fat preserved with mixed-tocopherols (form of Vitamin E), whole grain corn, fish meal, soy protein isolate, animal liver flavor, phosphoric acid, potassium chloride, caramel color, choline chloride, salt, calcium carbonate, Vitamin E supplement, taurine, L-Lysine monohydrochloride, zinc sulfate, ferrous sulfate, manganese sulfate, niacin, Vitamin A supplement, calcium pantothenate, thiamine mononitrate, copper sulfate, riboflavin supplement, Vitamin B-12 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid, Vitamin D-3 supplement, calcium iodate, biotin, menadione sodium bisulfite complex (source of Vitamin K activity), sodium selenite.

Science Diet® Adult Optimal Care Original

Chicken By-Product Meal, Whole Grain Corn, Brewers Rice Corn Gluten Meal, Animal Fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols and citric acid), Chicken Liver Flavor, Choline Chloride, Potassium Chloride, Calcium Sulfate, DL-Methionine, Vitamin E Supplement, Iodized Salt, vitamins (L-Ascorbyl-2-Polyphosphate (source of vitamin C), Vitamin E Supplement, Niacin, Thiamine Mononitrate, Vitamin A Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Riboflavin, Biotin, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Folic Acid, Vitamin D3 Supplement), Taurine, minerals (Ferrous Sulfate, Zinc Oxide, Copper Sulfate, Manganous Oxide, Calcium Iodate, Sodium Selenite), preserved with Mixed Tocopherols and Citric Acid, Phosphoric Acid, Beta-Carotene, Rosemary Extract.

Friskies® Indoor Delights®

Ground yellow corn, corn gluten meal, chicken by-product meal, meat and bone meal, soybean meal, beef tallow preserved with mixed-tocopherols (form of Vitamin E), turkey by-product meal, powdered cellulose, animal liver flavor, soybean hulls, malt extract, phosphoric acid, calcium carbonate, potassium chloride, salt, choline chloride, dried cheese powder, added color (Yellow 6, Yellow 5, Red 40, Blue 2, and other color), parsley flakes, taurine, calcium phosphate, Vitamin E supplement, zinc sulfate, ferrous sulfate, niacin, manganese sulfate, Vitamin A supplement, calcium pantothenate, thiamine mononitrate, copper sulfate, riboflavin supplement, Vitamin B-12 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid, Vitamin D-3 supplement, calcium iodate, biotin, menadione sodium bisulfite complex (source of Vitamin K activity), sodium selenite. C-6002

**ingredient lists as taken from company websites 8/2010*

Pet Foods We REALLY LIKE

Old Mother Hubbard (Wellness) • Nature's Variety (raw food diets, Instinct & Prairie)
• Natura (Evo, Innova) • Honest Kitchen (dehydrated raw food diets)
• Felidae

Pet Foods We Think Are PRETTY GOOD

Chicken Soup for The Pet Lover's Soul • Solid Gold
• Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance • Eagle Pack Holistic Select

Pet Foods We Think Are AVERAGE

Iams • Purina O.N.E. • Purina ProPlan • Fancy Feast • Nutro • Diamond

Pet Foods We DON'T LIKE

Meow Mix • Friskies • 9 Lives • Hill's Science Diet
• Purina Cat Chow • Generics of any kind