

Home Veterinary Service

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*** Make any switch to a new food or decrease in quantity over a 3 to 4 week time period. Cats put on a sudden diet may go into liver failure. They also hate change. GO VERY SLOWLY!!!**

Cats are strict carnivores, so they need a diet that is primarily made up of protein, fat, and a low percentage of carbohydrates. Think of the Atkins diet. Cats should NOT be eating grains; rice, wheat, corn, barley, etc. They are not biologically designed to digest this kind of food. Here is one way to Home-Cook for your cat:

Feed human quality food: broil or bake beef, poultry or fish. Pork can be too fatty and cause pancreatitis. No salty or sweet lunch meats; that's junk food for your cat. Add veggies to your mixture: about 3/4 meat to 1/4 veggies, preferably fresh or frozen. If you cook the vegetables with meat, it will possess the flavor that they love. Cats need greens: spinach, kale, broccoli and the like. Maintain a variety. A feral or barn cat will periodically nibble on grasses and they eat the stomach contents of prey animals, so this is an important component of a healthy feline diet.

- You must feed a quality **multivitamin** if you are going to home cook. Go to Bark or Dogs & Company (see Referral List) for a proper supplement. Don't just go to a generic pet store; many of the products sold there are sadly deficient.
- You can freeze this concoction in meal size baggies, if you make large quantity.
- If you aren't willing to home cook, **canned food tends to be a healthier choice overall than dry food**. They usually contain fewer grain products. Most dry food is bound together by grains. This has been proven to cause obesity, Diabetes Mellitus and cancer in cats because it is not a part of their diet in the wild. Restoring a more balanced, healthy diet usually causes cats to lose weight, gain muscle, and either eliminates their need for insulin entirely if they are diabetic, or at least greatly diminish the dosage that they need. You will rarely see a diabetic barn cat unless their owners feed large or unlimited amounts of dry food.

The healthiest diet for your cat is a **Raw Diet**. There are commercial preparations available, or you can shop for and prepare the food yourself. Though animals fed a balanced raw diet are vibrantly healthy, this is not a decision to be taken lightly. Raw meat that is not absolutely fresh or handled properly can cause vomiting, diarrhea and parasites. There is also a risk of salmonella and E. coli toxicity. If you wish you wish to pursue this style of feeding, do lots of research to fully educate yourself and handle fresh meat VERY CAREFULLY. Again, proper supplementation with vitamins and minerals is crucial. Cats that have eaten canned or dry food for a long period of time will often need a pro-biotic supplement to aid in digestion as they adjust to the change.

Best feeding options for your cat:

1. **Raw diet** – Expensive to buy pre-packaged products, and must be very careful, detail-oriented and dedicated in order to prepare your own; but well worth the effort and expense.
2. **Home cooked diet** – Easy to do, cost can be reasonable if you buy ingredients on sale in bulk.

3. **Top quality pet foods** – Dry and canned varieties sold at Bark and Dogs & Company.
4. **Common pet store brands** – Iams, Eukanuba, Science Diet, Nutro, etc.
5. **Grocery store brands** – Fancy Feast, Purina, Frisky's, etc.
6. **Generic products** – Safeway, Giant, etc.

****** Read labels for the best quality protein content and least amount of grains. Whole meat is best (chicken, beef, lamb, etc.), then meal (chicken meal, etc.). Avoid products that use meat by-products. This can include indigestible parts of the carcass and generally denotes a poorer quality food.***