

Feline Nutrition 101: Everything You Need to Know About Feeding Your Cats

As cat owners, we want the best for our feline companions, and that starts with their diet. A proper cat diet is essential for their health, happiness, and longevity.

In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the do's and don'ts in feline nutrition, covering everything from cat food ingredients to reviews of popular cat food brands. We'll also explore the best diet options for your furry friends, cat feeding schedules, and provide you with some useful tips and tricks to help your kitty lead the best life possible.

Understanding your cat's diet

Before we get into specifics, let's first understand what constitutes a healthy cat diet. Cats are obligate carnivores, which means their bodies require a diet primarily based on animal proteins. While they may be able to digest some plant based foods, their digestive system isn't built to absorb the nutrients they require from these food sources. Their nutritional needs are quite different from ours, so it's crucial to choose the right cat food. It is important to understand that just because cats can eat certain things, this doesn't automatically mean that they should.

Cat Food Ingredients - What to get and what to avoid

When it comes to selecting cat food, the ingredients list is your best friend. Look for high-quality protein sources like chicken, turkey, or fish. Avoid foods that contain excessive fillers like corn or soy, as they provide little nutritional value for your cat.

Quality protein is essential for your cat's muscle development, energy, and overall well-being. It's important to note that while plant-based proteins might be suitable for humans, cats can't derive the same benefits from them. When buying cat food you want to look for a high protein content - anything over 70% is ideal as well as a limited list of ingredients. Make sure to properly read the label on the cat food you purchase. You want to make sure that the meat content in the product actually consists of real meat. This may sound silly, but a lot of popular cat food brands tend to

bulk up their food by using so-called meat byproducts but little to no actual meat. Meat byproducts can be anything that we would not consume ourselves, such as skin bones, fat, hooves etc. And if we don't want to eat these, then why should our cats? But how do you find a brand of cat food that is actually good? We'll help you out!

Read our cat food reviews

Reading our cat food reviews can provide valuable insights for you as a cat owner. With years of experience we've tested some of the most popular brands of cat food and offer you our unbiased opinions. From supermarket to high end brands, we take a look at the ingredients, the pricing and - of course - how well these foods are received by our furry friends. Our extensive cat food reviews provide you with the tools to help you find well-received brands and specific products that suit your cat's needs. Head over to our review section to find your cat's new favourite food!

Choosing the right cat food - What's your favourite brand?

With countless cat food brands available, selecting the best option can be overwhelming. Here are some key factors to consider:

Cat Food Brands -

Reputable cat food brands prioritise your cat's well-being. Research and opt for brands known for using high-quality ingredients and adhering to industry standards for nutrition.

Look for brands that:

- **Have a long history:** Brands that have been around for a while often have a track record of producing reliable cat food. Watch out, however, for brands owned by big corporations as they often tend to save money by using byproducts and ingredients of lesser quality.
- **Use natural ingredients:** Avoid foods with artificial colours, flavours, and preservatives. Natural ingredients are more likely to benefit your cat's health.

- **Offer a variety of options:** Cats have different dietary needs at various life stages. Brands that offer options for kittens, adults, and seniors can simplify your shopping. It's also helpful to offer a variety of flavours as well as textures. You wouldn't want to eat the same thing day in day out, would you? Just like us, cats can get bored of their food, so providing enough variety is essential.

What is the best diet for cats?

The best diet for your cat may vary depending on factors like age, activity level, and any underlying health conditions. Usually your cat's diet can be one of the following three options.

Dry Cat Food

Dry cat food, often called kibble, is convenient as it's relatively cheap, easy to store and widely accepted by most of our feline friends. However, it's essential to choose high-quality dry food to ensure your cat receives proper nutrition. Personally, I would advise against exclusively feeding dry food as this always poses the risk of your cat not getting enough hydration which can lead to kidney problems and urinary issues amongst other things down the line. If you do feed kibble only, make sure you provide your cat with enough sources of fresh water around the house.

Pros of dry cat food:

- Convenience: Easy to store and serve.
- Cost: Relatively cheap in comparison to wet food

Cons of dry cat food:

- Dehydration Risk: Cats might not drink enough water, leading to potential urinary issues.
- Quality Concerns: Many lower-quality dry cat foods contain excessive carbohydrates and fillers.

Wet Cat Food

Wet cat food comes in cans or pouches and has a higher moisture content, which can help keep your cat hydrated. Wet food is a great way to provide your cat with all essential nutrients and offers a lot of variety to your cat as it comes in a plethora of different flavours and textures.

However, there are great differences between good quality wet food and not so good quality wet food. Make sure you take your time to read the label properly before purchasing.

Pros of wet cat food:

- Hydration: Helps maintain proper fluid balance.
- Palatability: Most cats find wet food highly appealing.

Cons of wet cat food:

- Short Shelf Life: Once opened, wet food should be refrigerated and used within a few days.
- Cost: Generally more expensive per serving than dry food.

Combination Diet

Some cat owners opt for a combination of dry and wet food to provide the benefits of both. Personally I prefer feeding my cats a diet consisting of mainly wet food, with a measured out amount of kibble each day for them to crunch on. Whichever diet you choose to feed your cats, make sure to look out for high quality ingredients and as little filler material as possible.

Pros of a combination diet:

- Balanced Nutrition: Combining the two can offer a well-rounded diet.
- Hydration: Wet food helps with moisture intake.

Cons of a combination diet:

- Cost: Can be more expensive than a dry-only diet.
- Storage: Requires space to store both dry and wet food.

What is the best feeding schedule for cats?

Establishing a consistent feeding schedule is crucial to maintaining your cat's health and weight. Most cats thrive on a twice-daily feeding regimen, others prefer smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day. It may take you some time to workout which type of feeding schedule works best for you and your cat. If you're out at work a lot you may also consider automatic pet feeders, which dispense food at certain times that you can easily set on your smartphone. This will allow your cat to have access to food without having to leave out huge portions that may spoil or that your cat may overeat on.

A typical feeding schedule for adult cats involves offering food in the morning and evening. However, kittens may require more frequent meals, up to four times a day. Be sure to measure your cat's food to prevent overfeeding or underfeeding. Make sure to keep an eye on your cat's weight and adjust their feeding schedule accordingly.

Plastic, ceramic or stainless steel - which cat food dishes are the best?

You know it yourself, you want to get your furry friend a new food bowl and the choices are nearly endless. From pet shops to online vendors, there is certainly no shortage when it comes to food bowls and cat food dishes. But what kind of dish should you buy?

It's difficult to choose, especially with so many cute and funny designs out there. While easy to clean and relatively cheap, I would refrain from using plastic dishes or bowls to feed your cat from. The surface of these can get easily scratched which then provides a perfect breeding ground for all kinds of nasty bacteria.

Ceramic or stainless steel bowls are a much safer option here. Yes, they are a little pricier but you are also investing into a food bowl that will likely last you much longer than a plastic dish. Both ceramic and stainless steel bowls are easy to clean and provide a much safer feeding environment for your cat.

When purchasing new food bowls it is crucial to make sure that your bowls are not too narrow. You want to look out for flat and wide rather than tall and narrow. Cat's whiskers are highly sensitive and scraping against the edges of their food bowl can easily cause something known as "whisker fatigue" - essentially, your cat gets stressed out by too much input coming from its whiskers. And we definitely don't want that!

If your cat is known to gobble up their food and eat way too fast it can be helpful to offer them elevated food bowls or so-called lick mats. Both slow down the eating process which can help reduce vomiting in the long run

Homemade cat food - the right choice?

Some cat owners prefer to make their cat's food at home to have more control over ingredients. While this can be done and is a great way to provide your cat with delicious and healthy food, it's essential to consult with a veterinary nutritionist to ensure your homemade cat food meets all of your cat's nutritional needs. You can't just throw together a bit of meat and vegetables and feed that to your cat. Your cat's nutritional needs are highly complex, which is why it is crucial to conduct proper research before deciding to make your cat's food at home.

Homemade cat food typically includes a protein source (meat, poultry, or fish), a complex carbohydrate source (like rice or sweet potatoes), and essential supplements (such as taurine and vitamins).

There are many great books, video tutorials and other resources out there that provide detailed instructions on how to provide your cat with a well-balanced, nutrient-rich homemade diet. Please make sure to take your time to get yourself informed before deciding to feed homemade. Your cat will thank you for it.

Conclusion - There's a lot more to feline nutrition than you may think!

Feeding your cat a balanced and nutritious diet is one of the most significant contributions you can make to their overall health and well-being. Understanding cat food ingredients, reading cat food reviews, and choosing reputable cat food brands are essential steps in providing the best diet for your feline friend. Additionally, establishing a consistent feeding schedule and consulting with your veterinarian will help ensure that your cat receives the right nutrition.

By prioritising their nutritional needs, you can look forward to a long and satisfying companionship with your beloved feline friend.

