

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS

Feline Nutrition

Cats are obligate carnivores and as such have specific nutritional needs that reflect their evolutionary background. The natural diet of the cat is a high protein, low carbohydrate diet derived from the prey they consume in the wild. As obligate carnivores, cats differ from dogs and other omnivores in their nutritional requirements. Commercial dry cat foods are convenient to give to cats; many cats enjoy or even prefer them and they are tolerated well in most situations. However, because of the differences in metabolism, feeding high carbohydrate diets to cats may predispose them to obesity and other conditions such as diabetes, urinary problems, and kidney problems. Cats evolved in the desert and have different water intake requirements from dogs and other omnivores. The cat bases its water intake on the water content of its food. Thus, cats consuming only dry food will ingest up to 50% less water than cats fed canned food. In the case of older cats that are prone to dehydration, feeding canned food can increase their water intake and may help prevent kidney disease and dehydration. In summary, cats have unique requirements that should be understood prior to deciding on which diet is best for your cat.

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