



Feeding Guide for Cats

- Feeding twice a day or having a bowl that is never empty are not “natural” ways for cats to eat. Think of a cat eating 8 mice throughout the day. These are small frequent meals. On average, eating even 10 extra pieces of dry cat food per day can result in 10% weight gain per year.
- We train them to ask for food and they train us to respond to their boredom or other unmet needs by feeding them. We may feel like a bad provider or rejected if our cats don't eat their food eagerly and seek second helpings. And because their meals are so small, we misunderstand and want them to eat more.
- Opportunities to express hunting behavior are a basic need for cat. The indoor cat initiative offers an informative explanation on choosing the correct toy for your cat:
<http://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats/basicneeds/preypref/index.cfm>.
- Food toys can also keep your cat engaged and allow them to hunt and play. Some examples of feeding toys are:
 - Multivet Slim cat – <http://www.petsafe.net/products/feeders/slimcat.aspx>
 - Cat activity fun board – <http://www.traininglines.co.uk/cat-activity-fun-board-3397-0.html>
 - Go!Cat!Go! Play-n-treat balls
 - FUNkitty Egg-Cersizer – <http://www.premier.com>
 - Aikiou Stimulo – <http://aikiou.com/stimulo-cat-bowls-and-feeders/>
 - Catit Design Senses Food Maze – <http://ca-en-hagen.com/cat/feeding/accessories/50745>
- Spayed and neutered cats need on average 22 calories per pound per day for their IDEAL body weight. (This means a 10 pound cat who should weigh 9 pounds needs a calorie count based on 9 pounds, not 10 pounds). Cats who are obese may need more than this in order to slowly lose weight.
- Cats need a MINIMUM of 2.4 grams of protein per pound per day to maintain their muscle mass. A natural diet in the wild contains 52% protein, 46% fat, and **ONLY 2% carbohydrates**.
- Protein: calorie malnutrition: when a cat is getting enough calories but not enough of them come from protein. As a result, there may or may not be weight loss, but there will be muscle wasting as well as deterioration in the hair coat quality. Cats are *obligate* carnivores, which means they require protein in their diet. If they don't get it, they will draw from the protein stores in their body (like muscle).