

Raw food for cats

Cats are carnivorous hunters and every part of their physiology is reflective of that fact. They are best suited to a PMR diet (80% muscle meat, 10% edible bone, 10% offal) with the addition of beneficial foods such as bone broth and goats milk.

To maintain a healthy balance of nutrition, they should be fed at least one white meat, one red meat and one source of fish per week.

KITTENS

Kittens can begin eating raw food from 4-6 weeks of age without any concern. They need 3-4 meals a day for the first six months, and two meals a day thereafter. Their food intake should be about 10% of their body weight (especially during growth spurts) gradually decreasing to 3% of their body weight for adult cats.

Giving your kitten macerated bone will help with dental development and provide them with healthy doses of digestible calcium. After a few weeks of minced bone and meat, they can begin to eat chunks of meat and offal, and chew on suitable raw meaty bones.

If your kitten is going through the usual practice of being vaccinated, desexed and treated for fleas and worms, it is important to keep in mind that these things can upset their natural gut flora and may lead to incidents of vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy. Try not to confuse this with a bad reaction to new food. A very gentle and highly nutritious liquid meal that is great for kittens is goats milk, especially if they are going through or detoxing from the above mentioned procedures.

ADULT CATS

Many cats are being diagnosed with conditions such as Irritable Bowel Disease, Obesity, Urinary Tract Infections, Diabetes and Kidney Disease. All of these conditions can be linked to the feeding of a non species appropriate diet that is high in starch and low in moisture content.

A balanced raw diet will provide your cat with all of the protein and essential vitamins they need to maintain healthy lean body mass and avoid chronic dehydration.

An adult cat will thrive on a diet of meat, bones and organs with suitable extras such as eggs, bone broth and goats milk. Cats are descendant from desert environments and are built for assimilating all of their nutritional requirements (including water) from small prey animals such as rodents, birds and reptiles. They will not benefit from plant based protein and have very little use for carbohydrates. An adult cat should be fed 1-2 meals a day (free feeding is 1. not suitable for raw food and 2. leads to obesity) and generally needs about 3% of their body weight in food.

SENIORS

As cats age, their ability to digest and absorb protein decreases. It is therefore crucial that the protein they eat is of high quality and that they get enough to sustain their requirements.

Many cats who have lived their lives on a high starch diet end up obese, and are put on weight loss food which is usually low in fat and high in insoluble fibre. This increases the passing of fecal matter which increases water loss, resulting in dehydration and poor absorption of nutrients. On top of this, cats livers are designed to constantly release enzymes to break down proteins. If their diet does not contain enough protein, their liver will continue to function this way but instead the enzymes will begin to break down the cats own muscle mass. This gives some reason as to why many senior cats are either obese or severely underweight.

Aside from a high quality, meat based protein diet, older cats will greatly benefit from bone broth and goats milk to support to their digestive and musculoskeletal systems.

TAURINE

Taurine is an amino acid that is especially important for cats. It is essential for vision, heart health and the function of the reproductive, nervous and immune systems.

Taurine is naturally occurring in animal based protein, so a cat on a raw diet will be able to assimilate their taurine needs effectively. Commercial pet food is often supplemented with added taurine because they are likely to be using plant based protein, which does not provide taurine, or they are using heat processing methods which degrade any taurine that was present in the unprocessed ingredients.

TIPS FOR "FUSSY" CATS

If your cat is addicted to biscuits, you might have to start with canned food as there are no salts and flavours in raw, and it will seem incredibly bland to their overstimulated taste buds.

If you are transitioning a cat from wet food onto a raw diet, try mixing a small amount of the raw food in with their old food to introduce the taste before increasing the amount.

If your cat doesn't like the raw food at first, try fasting them for 12-24 hours with liquid meals of bone broth and/or goats milk, then reintroduce the new food to a hungrier cat.

Try stimulating their appetite with coconut oil, bone broth or a quail egg added to their food.

The information and advice on this article is based on our own research and years of personal experience. We are not veterinarians and do not claim to diagnose, treat or cure any condition, only pass on what we have learnt and witnessed.

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