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Cat Care (Quickstudy: Home)

QuickStudy © 2002 **Cat Care**

Housing

- Plus on making your cat an indoor cat.
- Cats left outdoors are subject to a multitude of health hazards.
- Trauma from cars, dogs and squabbling with other cats.
- Increased exposure potential to infectious diseases, such as the feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia, from interaction with stray cats.
- Increased exposure potential to poisons and environmental toxins.
- Outdoor cats also have a greater chance of contracting diseases that are hazardous to people, such as rabies and certain types of intestinal parasites.
- If you must allow your cat to go outside, do so only during daylight hours, as most dangers are encountered at night.

Physical Examinations

- Should be performed by a qualified veterinarian at least once a year for cats 8 years of age and younger, every 6 months for cats over 8 years of age.
- Monthly self-exams performed at home are useful for the early detection of diseases and disorders that may arise. Refer to your veterinarian.



Nutrition

Commercial cat foods

- Strong nutrition leads to strong immune systems, high-energy levels and healthy cats.
- Cats have unique nutritional needs.
- Diet should include elevated amounts of high-quality protein.
- Taurine, an essential amino acid, is required in sufficient amounts in the diet to prevent heart disease. Most commercial foods today meet this requirement.
- **Commercial cat foods** come in moist, semi-dry and dry varieties.
- Dry foods usually cost less per unit of measurement and have longer shelf lives.
- Moist and semi-moist foods are more palatable, aromatic and easier to chew.
- May be preferred by older cats suffering from periodontal disease and experiencing declines in sensory taste and smell.
- Useful for weaning kittens less than 8 weeks of age.
- Cats with chronic urinary tract disease may benefit from the increased moisture in the diet.
- If moist food is fed, discard any uneaten portions within 2 hours.
- Follow the manufacturer's feeding recommendations concerning daily feeding amounts.
- For kittens under 5 months of age, feed twice a day.
- Older kittens and adult cats can be fed once daily or free-choice.

Commercial cat foods

- Be sure your cat is kept free of intestinal parasites, as these can rob your cat of vital daily nutrients.
- Many commercial diets are commercially sterilized, yet your veterinarian is a better recommendation.
- Select a ration that is most nutritionally complete and balanced for your cat's particular stage of life, health status and activity level.
- **Kittens** (less than 12 months of age) need rations that are higher in protein than most adult rations to ensure proper growth and musculoskeletal development. There are many foods specifically labeled for kittens that will provide this extra nutrition.
- **Active cats** require more calories than sedentary cats.
- Pregnant and lactating cats should be fed kitten food to provide increased amounts of protein.
- **Cats over 8 years of age** should be fed rations lower in calories and higher in fiber than standard adult cat foods to promote weight control and maintain intestinal motility. There are many foods specifically labeled for senior cats that will meet these criteria.
- **Cats suffering from heart disease or kidney disease** will need diets low in sodium. These are available from veterinarians.
- **Pets predisposed to cystitis and other urinary challenges**, feed a ration that is low in magnesium and ash.
- **Cystitis**, characterized by crystal formation in the urine, can be treated with a diet that is low in magnesium and ash.

Commercial cat foods

- **Therapeutic diets** are made cats due to urinary tract obstruction.
- **Diets low in magnesium and ash** discourage crystal formation.
- **Many diets are now available in forms that promote urinary tract health.** These are also available from your veterinarian.
- **Cats suffering from upper respiratory infections** require diets with strong aromas to accommodate for a decreased sense of smell. Most foods are usually more aromatic than dry foods.
- **If a change in diet** is ever necessary, wean your cat onto the new food over several weeks.
- **Promote gastrointestinal upset** secondary to ingredient changes.
- Blend the new ration with the old ration, gradually increasing the percentage of new ration bid each day.
- **Keep fresh water** accessible at all times.
- Filtered or bottled water is best.
- Change the water daily.
- Clean food and water bowls at least once a week.
- If your cat ever loses its appetite and stops eating for more than 3 days, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- **A loss of appetite** can be caused by fatty acidosis, behavior or by some underlying disease disorder.
- **Self-starvation** in cats can lead to life-threatening liver disease.



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Synopsis

Guide to increasing the health and life of your feline friend.

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Customer Reviews

It has an overview of most of the cat's body systems and includes a vaccine guide for owners, as well as tips for first aid and behavior as well as senior cat care. I like to carry it with me for quick reference.

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