

## Cats Need Catkins

One of the worst problems we see in cats is obesity caused by their diet. Twenty years ago, most of the cats we saw were 7, 8, 9 pounds. Now they are 13, 15, 18 pounds. And no, they are not “bigger boned” than the cats of yesterday. They have packed on more fat. And just as in human medicine we see many diseases associated with fat. Diabetes of course is a huge problem. But we also see cats with breathing problems, arthritis, urinary, digestive and skin problems. Plus we see non-critical problems as well. Is the cat’s hair coat greasy, flakey and matted? It’s their diet. Is the cat constantly begging for food or waking the owner up at 5 in the morning to eat? It’s their diet.

Cats are “obligate carnivores”. This means they need to eat a high protein diet. Think meat... mice, moles, voles, chipmunks and the occasional baby bunny. They are not designed to eat carbohydrates. They don’t go out and harvest grain. They don’t consider corn, wheat and rice their prey. They don’t pick blueberries off the bush for a dose of anti-oxidants. Their digestive systems are not miniature replicas of humans and they weren’t built for digesting carbohydrates. What they do share with humans however, is the “sugar high” and then the “sugar crash” that occurs when they eat carbohydrates. They also share the “carb cravings” that people get. Yet the majority of cat foods are packed with carbohydrates. And what happens to all those carbs that we feed? Well all those extra calories are packed on as fat.



We all know the extra weight causes a lot of health concerns. But since 1994 the medical community has also realized fat is not just a quiet substance. Fat produces all sorts of chemicals including some nasty ones that cause chronic inflammation. And chronic inflammation is bad.

So if carbohydrates are bad, what cat foods should we choose and what should we avoid? Most people will be surprised to hear that we don't recommend a dry food only diet. Almost all dry foods are high in carbohydrates. Dry food has to be made into dry little pellets and the only way to do that is to add carbs. Although it is certainly easy to put out a bowl of food and let a cat graze all day, it almost always leads to a fat cat. Cats need a high protein diet instead. The protein keeps them lean, satisfies their hunger (no sugar high and no sugar crash) and as an added benefit, they don't constantly bug their owners for food and they develop a hair coat like a mink stole.

So basically, canned foods are a much better choice. Canned foods mimic those little moles and voles. They are high in protein and low in carbs. (Think of the Atkins diet but for cats, aka Catkins.) The average sized cat should be about 10 pounds and should eat a total of one 5.5



---

444 Rt. 9W Glenmont NY 12077 Phone: (518) 434-7373 Fax: (518) 434-1618 e-mail: BethVet@aol.com

oz can of food per day, half in the morning and half at night. But you still have to be careful what you choose. AVOID any canned foods that say “with sauce”, “with gravy”, “shredded” or “minced”. These foods are packed with carbs. The ideal canned food is a pate without rice, wheat or corn added. Many grocery store and pet food store brands fit the bill. Read the label. Be sure the food you choose says it provides 100% complete nutrition. Choose a name brand. Don’t choose generics. (The low quality protein in generic diets can cause foul-smelling stools or diarrhea, and may be lacking in essential vitamins and minerals.) And if you have any questions about choosing an appropriate diet or weaning your kitty to canned food, give us a call.