

THE 'HUNGRY' OR GREEDY CAT

Here, appetite is no guide to need. Feed 2-3 times daily but do not exceed the daily amount according to weight.

Being out at work each day does create some problems but a slight change in established routine is worthwhile. Feed in the morning but lift uneaten food before departure and give the main feed in the evening.

MOVING TO A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

There are two strands to the Holistic Approach to health and nutrition. The first of these is the selection of suitable food. However, it is almost as important to ensure that the quantity of food is right. Overfeeding will undo much of the benefit of feeding the correct type of food.

1. All family members (and neighbours!) must agree to cooperate by ensuring that the correct diet is followed i.e. no tit-bits, table scraps or other foods.
2. Gradually introduce the new food to your pet. Gradual introduction, by allowing a slow change in intestinal bacteria, minimises the risk of digestive upset.
3. Quantity of food. It is better to feed slightly less food that will be properly absorbed rather than a large quantity, which could cause an upset.
4. Before changing your cat's diet it is advisable to seek professional help from your Veterinary Surgeon or Burns Pet Nutrition.

This approach has to be tailored to the needs of the individual because there are so many individuals whose differing needs have to be accommodated. It is not enough to try the diet and hope for the best.



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BURNS

Developed by a Veterinary Surgeon

A Natural Health Guide for Cats

by

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DOES YOUR CAT MOULT EXCESSIVELY OR SUFFER FROM SKIN IRRITATION?

Many cats suffer from skin and coat problems which take the form of persistent moulting, obsessive grooming, balding patches or skin eruptions (eczema)

Owners regard persistent moulting as an irritating but unavoidable fact of life which is caused or aggravated by central heating. Balding and eczema are often blamed on hormonal imbalance. This is because the problems are most commonly seen in neutered cats (male and female) and because the condition can be relieved by regular treatment with synthetic progesterone.

This conclusion is as logical as the assumption that an infection is caused by antibiotic deficiency, or a broken bone is caused by a lack of plaster of Paris!

Excess moulting, balding and eczema all have a common cause, namely, the accumulation of toxic waste in the system which usually results from unsuitable diet. Shedding of hair and skin eruptions show that the body is attempting to expel this burden of toxic matter.

Central heating is not the *cause* of excess moulting/ baldness but may aggravate the problem in two ways. Heat (a) draws toxins to the surface of the body and (b) reduces energy needed to maintain body temperature thus altering the balance between intake and expenditure of energy.

Neutering also reduces the animal's energy requirements. This reduced energy need tends to create an "excess" in the system.

Progesterone (and steroids) work, I believe, by 'locking in' the toxic matter within the body, thereby relieving symptoms but causing the toxic waste to accumulate in the system rather than being eliminated.

A high quality natural dried food which is low in protein and fat can provide the means whereby the body can rid itself of these toxins.

DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS

Loose bowel motions, vomiting, abdominal discomfort, straining, passing blood or mucus are all signs of upset digestion. Whatever the diagnosis, the problem can usually be attributed to one cause - *Improper diet*

Digestive upset is often blamed on a diet being 'too rich'. This is a myth which some manufacturers are happy to

perpetuate because it implies that their food is of a high standard. The reality is generally the reverse of this. Low quality foods containing indigestible ingredients are more likely to cause problems than foods which contain easily digested materials.

ANTI-HAIRBALL DIETS FOR CATS?

Special diets to prevent hairball contain high levels of fibre, which increases the amount of water held in the digestive tract. This helps to keep the swallowed hair soft and moist and so aid in its expulsion.

Unfortunately, there is potential for creating a problem here. Increased secretion of water into the gut will lead to a tendency to produce a more concentrated urine and this may predispose to cystitis or FLUTD (Feline Lower Urinary Tract disease, including formation of urinary calculi - stones)

A healthy system means that the cat will not over-groom. Also the cat will not ordinarily shed hair which can be swallowed.

DIETS TO PREVENT TOOTH TARTAR AND GUM DISEASE

Tartar on the teeth predisposes to gum disease, bad breath and eventually loss of teeth. A popular belief (even among vets) is that tartar is caused by the lack of abrasive food material to clean the teeth. Special diets to prevent tooth tartar and gum disease are designed to create an abrasive action to clean the teeth.

The main reason why cats and dogs get tartar on the teeth is because waste material dissolved in the body fluids (saliva) washes over the teeth and forms plaque.

Many cats receive diets which exceed their needs or which contain low quality ingredients and chemical additives. This may impair the body's ability to function in a healthy, natural manner.

Therefore the solution is to keep the system clean and eliminate the build-up of waste toxins by using smaller quantities of a good quality food. A healthy system will not have debris dissolved in the saliva so there is no need for a special diet or even for teeth cleaning.

MANAGEMENT OF CYSTITIS & REDUCTION OF URINARY CRYSTALS IN CATS

Excess nutrients and the build-up of toxic matter in the cat's system may damage health. Some pet food companies have designed diets which enable the cat to produce an acidic urine to prevent the occurrence of struvite stones, or an alkaline urine to prevent the occurrence of calcium oxalate stones. There is even contradiction between the different companies as to whether the urine should be acidic or alkaline!

Quantity of food should be controlled. It is essential that intake meets but does not exceed requirements .

Fresh water should be available at all times. The food can be moistened with water to increase liquid intake.

CHANGING YOUR CAT'S DIET

Many owners overestimate how much food their cat actually needs. Cats are small animals and are not noted for strenuous physical exercise. These factors reduce their food requirements. Consistent overfeeding leads to loss of appetite, fussiness and contributes to toxin production.

THE FUSSY EATER

Feed 2-3 times daily, on demand ensuring that the quantity offered is such that the cat will consume the whole amount. For most cats a few pellets at a time will suffice. This "rationing" helps to avoid overfeeding and should prevent the cat from seeking food elsewhere.

Any food uneaten after 10 minutes should be removed and none offered until the cat next demands feeding. Occasionally your cat may ask for food but refuse the new diet. Resist the temptation to try an alternative food. *If you give in at this crucial stage all will be lost.*

You will probably find the cat will eat happily a few hours later confirming that he/ she wasn't really hungry in the first instance.