

Transitioning to a Raw Diet

You've decided to feed your cat a bio-appropriate raw diet. Now you wonder, "Will she eat it?" Many cats take to raw meat diets right away, giving you a look that says, "Finally, real food!" Try using a complete raw meal, thaw it in the refrigerator, warm it up a bit and see what happens. If your cat chows down, you can switch to raw foods right away, no transition is necessary!

If she won't eat it, don't despair. Even long-term kibble addicts can be transitioned to a better diet. It just takes patience and persistence. The results are worth it, so stick with it and your kitty will come around to loving a healthy diet.

For kibble addicts . . .

The first step is to stop free-feeding dry food. Set up regular mealtimes. Introduce high protein canned food along with the kibble to get her used to the softer texture. Put food out for thirty minutes, then put it away. Your cat can easily go eight to twelve hours between meals. This is natural in the wild. Being a little hungry at dinnertime makes her more willing to try a new food. Pet your cat while she eats, and hand feed food. Add a "bribe" topping to the canned food to encourage her to try it. Keep offering the canned food at every meal, no matter how long it takes. She will eventually convert, and you can slowly reduce the kibble portion of the meal.

If your cat already eats canned food . . .

Switching to a raw diet is just a matter of getting her used to the new food. Raw diets don't have much odor, so she may not recognize it as food right away. Put some raw food next to her canned meal to get her to start associating the smell with dinner. You can mix a very small amount of raw food into the canned food, and then slowly increase the proportion over several weeks. "Bribe" toppings work great with raw food, too!

Some cats can be enticed to raw diets by offering small chunks of meat. Fresh chicken breast, chicken liver, turkey, pork, beef and rabbit are all kitty favorites. Try this: drop a small chunk of raw meat into a baggie with grated parmesan cheese, and shake to coat it. It's like Shake 'n Bake® without the bake! See "[How to Transition Your Cat to a Raw Diet](#)" for more detail and tips!

Important tips.

Make sure your cat eats every day. Being a little hungry helps motivate your cat to try a new food, but never let her go more than 24 hours without eating. Always thaw raw foods in the refrigerator. Warm raw food in a plastic zip bag placed in a bowl of warm water. Never use a microwave. Provide a quiet, stress-free place for your cat to eat. If your cat is diabetic, consult your veterinarian before transitioning. A change in diet can drastically and immediately affect the amount of insulin a diabetic cat requires.

Get the details.

For more information, visit [Feline Nutrition](#). If you are new to feeding a raw meat diet or have been using raw diets for years, we have a wealth of science-backed information on feline health and nutrition. To join the discussion, find us at Feline Nutrition on [Facebook](#).

Join us in helping cats to better health.

Membership in Feline Nutrition is free. Learn how you can be a part of changing how cats are fed. For complete information, visit

FelineNutritionFoundation.org

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Bribe Toppings:

- Grated Parmesan cheese
- Brewer's yeast
- Bonito flakes
- Dehydrated meat treats
- Juice from water-packed fish
- Chopped cooked meat
- Fortiflora® powder
- Catnip
- Crushed kibble



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The first step is to stop free-feeding dry food.



Kittens take to raw food like ducks to water.