



“No known dietary carbohydrate requirement exists for the cat.”

National Research Council's Subcommittee on Cat Nutrition

The problems with dry food:

- Too low in moisture
- Too high in carbohydrates
- Protein from plant rather than animal sources
- Causes cats to overeat
- Implicated in causing or contributing to diabetes, IBD and other diseases
- Does not clean teeth



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The Dangers of Dry Food

It is very important to remove dry food from your cat's diet. This one change alone is a big step forward in improving your cat's health. Dry foods, whether premium, prescription or "natural" are mostly grain-based and have a carbohydrate content of about 25 to 50%. Cats have no nutritional requirement for carbohydrates and feeding them a diet of what is basically meat-flavored cereal can be detrimental to their health. If you consider feline physiology and what the species has been eating for thousands of years – whole, raw prey - it makes sense that grains shouldn't be part of the cat's diet. Here are some of the problems with dry cat foods:

Low moisture content.

Dry cat food is less than 10% moisture. Consider that a cat's natural prey, a mouse, is about 65 to 75% moisture. Because cats are designed to fulfill most of their water requirements by eating fresh raw food, they naturally have a low thirst drive. When all sources of fluid intake are added together, what's in their food and what they drink, cats eating a dry food diet consume less than half the water of a cat on a canned or raw diet. This chronic dehydration can cause their urine to become overly concentrated, which can lead to urinary tract problems.

Too high in carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates are usually thought of as energy foods, but felines utilize protein and fat for those needs, and have a limited ability to digest carbohydrates. A cat's natural diet - rodents, rabbits, insects and birds - is less than 2% carbohydrate. The excess carbohydrate in dry food promotes obesity in cats, and is also implicated in feline diabetes.



Dry cat food does not clean your cat's teeth.

Protein from plant rather than animal sources.

Complete proteins contain ample amounts of essential amino acids and are found in foods such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs. Incomplete proteins found in legumes, grains and vegetables don't provide the essential amino acids that a cat needs - such as taurine - which come from animal sources.

Causes cats to overeat.

Cats have a unique system of satiety signals from the food they eat. Because the cat evolved in an environment rich in protein and fat, but deficient in carbohydrate, consumption of fat and protein evolved as the signal to the cat that it could stop eating. Consumption of carbohydrate doesn't have this effect, and the end result is cats that overeat and become obese. Overeating carb-laden foods causes repeated surges of insulin in the cat's body. For many cats, this unremitting stress on their metabolic system results in diabetes.

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.

Get the details.

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We have a wealth of science-backed information on feline health and nutrition. To join the discussion, find us at

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