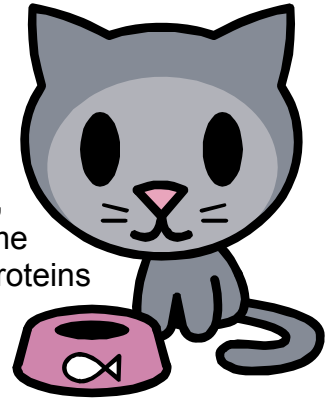


# WHAT SHOULD I FEED MY CAT?

car-ni-vore ☒ 'kɑr nə,vɔr, -,vɔʊr

1. An animal that eats flesh
2. A flesh-eating mammal of the order Carnivora, comprising the dogs, cats, bears, seals, and weasels.
3. An insectivorous plant.



Let's think about this for a minute...Cats are *obligate* carnivores—meat eaters. **Their normal diet consists only of mice, rats, snakes, rabbits, squirrels, voles, etc.** Their gastrointestinal systems are designed to consume large amounts of animal-based proteins (meat), *not* plant-based proteins (grains/carbohydrates). Can cats survive on plant-based diets? Yes. Do they thrive? No. So why do we feed plant-based diets? Have you studied the labels on cat foods lately? Do you know that 97% of *all* dry cat foods are *completely* inappropriate for carnivorous felines? Let's discuss why!

In the wild, a cat's diet consists of 3-5% carbohydrates. The average dry cat food contains between 35-50%!!! This is not what nature intended! Why would companies thought to produce high quality cat foods make diets so different from a cat's natural diet? Because grains are cheaper and dry food is convenient.

So why are carbohydrates detrimental to cats??

- First, cats simply do not utilize glucose well due to enzymatic inefficiencies or insufficiencies. They lack salivary amylase and glucokinase, which help to digest and store glucose.
- This leads to the second problem-- transient hyperglycemia. Over time, the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas burn out, leading to diabetes.
- The third problem relates to all the "extra" carbohydrate and where it goes. That's right—it is stored as fat!

Current estimates suggest that 30-55% of our cats are overweight or substantially obese. Traditional diet foods for cats are based on the assumption that fat needs to be restricted, not carbohydrate. However, we now know that cats feel full based on protein content and quality. In other words, cats may over eat high carb diets because they are never satiated (feel full).

Now consider the fact that diet foods have the highest levels of carbohydrate! Cats will eventually lose some weight on these diets but it is often to the detriment of lean body mass. As with humans and dogs, successful weight loss requires maintenance of lean body mass. **Light diets have no place in the feline pantry, and you will never again hear me recommend one!** Finally, cats have shorter intestinal tracts and higher concentrations of intestinal bacteria compared to humans and dogs. Research suggests this may enhance digestion of proteins and fats. High carb/fiber diets may alter bacterial numbers or species which can lead to overgrowth of non-beneficial or even pathogenic



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species. This can lead to inflammation in the GI tract and potentially IBD (inflammatory bowel disease).



**Now let's talk about another important nutrient that is lacking in all dry cat foods—water.** A natural feline prey-based diet is 70-75% water. Dry foods are only 10% water. No problem, right? Cats will simply drink more water from the bowl to make up for it, right? Think again! Cats do not have a strong thirst drive! They are designed by nature to obtain 75% of their fluids from their prey. Cats fed dry food drink *half* the amount of water compared to cats eating canned food or prey. The end result is chronic low-level dehydration. Now let's think about two of the most common feline illnesses: chronic kidney disease and cystitis. Water is extremely important in the treatment and prevention of both of these diseases. In fact, the only recommendation that seems to benefit cats with cystitis is feeding a premium canned diet. This will increase the urine volume and decrease the concentration of crystals.

**(On a side note, research has indicated that high carb diets actually *lead* to the formation of struvite crystals. Now take a look at the carb content of dry C/D, W/D, and K/D—surprising isn't it??!)**

So what does all this mean? What type of diets should we be feeding our cats? What brands are the most appropriate? There are only 3 low carb, high protein dry foods on the market at the present time. They are EVO, CORE, and Instinct Raw. EVO has 612 kcal/cup, so use it with care in overweight cats! It must be measured and fed twice daily. Overweight cats would do better with the other two diets which have 536 kcal and 491 kcal/cup, respectively. Again, it is always better to feed 2 meals per day and to measure out a set amount. Some cats will overeat regardless of what you feed them! These diets can be found at Complete PetSmart (beside Trader Joe's) and CORE is also available at PetCo. They are more expensive, but you don't feed very much so they last much longer! This is the most convenient and cost-effective way to feed a more natural diet.

**The most ideal diet though, is high quality canned food.**

The vast majority of canned diets have low carbs and provide 70-78% water.

For an extensive list of nutritional info and carb content of dry and canned diets, go to [www.catinfo.org](http://www.catinfo.org). This is a lot of information to digest. Most of it is common sense when you stop and think about it. All of it goes against the grain of what we have been taught about feline nutrition. There is one indisputable fact though: cats are obligate carnivores, and we should make every effort to feed them as such!

Janet & Binky's Table of Dry Cat Food Nutritional Information

Food	% calories from			per 100 kcal		
	Protein	Fat	Carbs	Fiber	Phosph	Calories



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Food	% calories from			per 100 kcal		per cup	
				(g)	(mg)		
Eukanuba:							
	Adult Chicken & Rice	30	45	25		573	
	Adult Hairball Relief	30	45	25		473	
	Adult Salmon & Rice	30	45	25		534	
	Kitten Chicken & Rice Formula	31	47	22		570	
	Lamb & Rice Formula for Cats	29	46	25		570	
	Mature Care	33	39	28		484	
	Weight Control Formula for Cats	30	31	39		331	
Eukanuba Prescription:							
	Low pH/S	31	38	32	0.5	229	441
	Low Residue	32	31	38	0.4	234	369
	Moderate pH/O	30	38	32	0.5	234	451
	Multi-stage Renal	23	48	29	0.5	120	535
	Optimum Weight Control	37	29	34	0.5	276	357
	Restricted Calorie	34	23	43	0.6	267	271
Iams:							
	Active Maturity Cat	31	34	35			383
	Hairball Care	28	46	26			442
	Indoor Hairball Care	31	34	35			364
	Indoor Weight & Hairball Care	31	29	40			303
	Kitten Food	30	47	23			468
	Lamb & Rice Formula for Cats	28	45	27			461
	Multi-Cat with Chicken	34	41	25			333
	Multi-Cat with Chicken & Salmon	34	41	25			364
	Ocean Fish & Rice Formula	28	46	26			460
	Original Formula Cat Food	28	46	26			433
	Weight Control	28	29	43			346
Hills "Science":							
	Advanced Protection Adult	29	40	31	0.2	178	481
	Advanced Protection Senior	29	37	34	0.5	171	391
	Adult Chicken & Rice	26	46	28	0.2	169	495
	Adult Lamb & Rice	26	44	30	0.2	163	496
	Adult Ocean Fish & Rice	27	44	29	0.3	164	488
	Adult Original	26	45	29	0.2	167	493
	Hairball Control Adult	29	46	26	2	167	339
	Hairball Control Light Adult	37	23	40	2.3	209	283
	Hairball Control Senior 7+	30	42	28	2	175	326
	Indoor Cat Adult	37	23	40	2.3	209	281



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Food	% calories from			per 100 kcal		
Kitten Original	29	50	21	0.4	243	510
Light Adult	37	23	41	1.8	211	316
Nature's Best Chicken	28	43	30	0.2	171	420
Nature's Best Fish	28	43	29	0.2	181	414
Nature's Best Kitten/ Fish	32	47	20	0.3	246	419
Oral Care Adult	29	45	26	1.8	180	337
Senior 7+ Original	28	40	32	0.5	164	386
Sensitive Skin Adult	28	43	29	0.2	168	400
Sensitive Stomach Adult	28	43	28	0.2	168	406
Hills Prescription:						
C/D	30	35	36	0.2	182	309
D/D Duck & Green Pea	26	47	26	1.2	169	466
D/D Rabbit & Green Pea	27	45	28	1.2	175	460
D/D Venison & Green Pea	26	46	28	1.2	176	470
G/D	28	38	34	0.3	127	297
I/D	33	41	26	0.3	211	483
K/D	22	43	35	0.2	110	477
L/D	25	45	30	0.4	155	505
M/D	43	44	13	1.3	178	480
P/D	29	53	18	0.3	213	542
R/D	40	25	35	4.2	257	263
S/D (short-term use only!!!)	26	49	24	0.1	167	521
T/D	30	39	30	1.9	203	265
W/D	39	24	37	2.2	220	281
X/D	29	34	37	0.2	161	288
Z/D	34	36	30	0.4	148	396
Nutro:						
Max Kitten	30	44	25	0.3	278	503
Max Cat Adult	31	41	29	0.3	246	420
Max Cat Lite	36	27	37	1.8	296	329
Natural Choice Kitten	30	38	31	0.4	267	397
Natural Choice Cat Adult	29	37	34	0.2	193	378
Natural Choice Hairball Mgmt.	30	35	35	0.7	286	367
Senior Max Cat	28	29	43	0.2	231	380
Wysong:						
Anergen Dry	25	30	46	0.4	366	343
Geriatr Dry	30	41	29	0.5	211	430
Nurture Dry	32	47	22	0.7	181	452
Uretic Dry	28	49	23	0.4	174	470



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Food		% calories from			per 100 kcal		
	Vitality Dry	32	40	28	0.6	189	433
	Cat Treats	30	45	25	0.6	281	384 per 100g
Natura:	<i>submitted by Patricia &amp; Rhamu</i>						
	Innova Cat & Kitten	32	45	23	0.6	268	537
	Innova Reduced Fat	33	25	42	1.6	281	398
	Innova Senior	39	30	31	2.3	345	396
	California Natural Chicken & Brown Rice	35	39	26	1	217	393
	Healthwise Cat	27	43	31	0.8	229	513
	Healthwise Kitten	29	46	25	0.7	234	548
	Innova EVO Cat & Kitten	44	47	8	0.2	396	612
Purina	<i>mostly from Heska Patent 6,203,825; prescription values from Linda &amp; Friday</i>						
	Purina DM (CNM-DM)	50	37	13	0.3	373	592
	Purina NF	27	28	45	0.3	104	398
	Purina OM	40	21	39	2.4	346	326
	Purina UR	32	26	42	0.4	221	366
	Urinary Tract Health Formula	29	36	35	0.3	245	433
	Cat Chow	34	29	37	0.4		394
	Kitten Chow	37	30	32	0.5		
	Cat Chow Mature	37	23	40	0.5		
	O.N.E. Chicken & Rice - Cats	30	33	37	0.4		
	O.N.E. Chicken & Rice - Kittens	32	37	31	0.3		
	ProPlan Growth	29	44	27	0.3		
	ProPlan Adult	30	36	34	0.4		
	ProPlan Hairball	35	37	27	1.2	326	
	ProPlan Lite	36	23	41	0.7		
	ProPlan Turkey & Barley	31	39	30	0.6		
Tender Vittles	<i>submitted by Shirley, Pico &amp; Fuzz</i>						
	Tender Vittles Beef	39	32	29	0.5	586	
	Tender Vittles Chicken	38	32	30	0.5	603	
	Tender Vittles Country	37	34	29	0.5	601	
	Tender Vittles Gourmet	38	32	30	0.5	622	
	Tender Vittles Seafood	37	33	29	0.5	593	
	Tender Vittles Tuna	40	30	30	0.5	601	
Authority							
	Adult Chicken Meal & Rice	30	38	32	0.4	228	404
	Adult Lamb Meal & Rice	32	38	30	0.5	264	376
	Adult Whitefish Meal & Rice	30	38	31	0.3	291	410



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Food		% calories from			per 100 kcal		
	Kitten Chicken Meal & Rice	31	45	25	0.3	253	420
	Lite Chicken Meal & Rice	35	24	41	2.5	282	312
	Senior Chicken Meal & Rice	31	27	42	0.7	238	344
Eagle Pack	<i>submitted by Cathy, Sonny and Spike GA</i>						
	Adult	26	44	30	0.6	156	396
	Hairball	28	45	27	1.2	180	349
	Holistic Select	28	45	26	0.6	217	387
	Kitten	28	46	26	0.5	182	422
	Less Active	28	30	42	0.7	179	351
Royal Canin Veterinary							
	Calorie Control 38 High Protein	45	24	31	1.5	397	230
	Calorie Control 29 High Fiber	36	27	37	4.3	248	251
	Control Formula	29	34	36	0.6	162	365
	Dental DD 27	28	35	36	1.4	209	326
	Diabetic DS 44	46	29	24	1.4	245	239
	Growth DD 34	31	44	26	0.7	268	393
	Green Peas & Lamb	33	31	37	0.5	410	233
	Green Peas & Venison	32	33	36	0.5	383	239
	HiFactor	35	29	36	1.3	224	254
	Hypoallergenic HP 23	23	44	33	1.2	182	343
	Modified (renal)	21	44	34	0.3	111	432
	Neutered Young Adult	37	26	37	2.1	319	265
	Neutered Young Male	41	26	33	2.1	322	289
	Neutered Mature	27	35	39	0.9	168	309
	Neutral	27	27	46	0.9	258	357
	Renal LP 21	20	45	35	0.8	115	395
	Sensitivity RD 30 (Rice & Duck)	32	32	36	1.1	344	258
	Treats	28	14	58	0.5	391	1.41 /piece
	Urinary SO 30	30	40	30	0.8	216	302
	Weight	42	23	35	1.5	355	260
IVD	<i>submitted by Kathy &amp; Chauncy</i>						
	Development	28	47	25	0.3	242	389
	Mature	26	35	40	0.6	164	351
	Neutral	27	27	46	0.9	261	317
	Lamb & Potato	30	32	38	0.8	238	346
	Venison & Potato	26	25	49	0.6	202	340
	Rabbit & Potato	30	30	39	0.7	228	344
	Duck & Potato	30	30	39	0.7	228	344



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Food		% calories from			per 100 kcal		
	Peas & Rabbit	32	31	37	1.8	221	288
9-Lives	<i>submitted by Erimesse &amp; Sammy</i>						
	Beef, Liver & Turkey	32	29	39	0.5	296	306
	Chicken & Salmon	32	30	38	0.5	268	310
	Plus Care Tuna & Egg	34	26	40	0.6	377	292
Chicken Soup for the Pet-Lover's Soul		<i>submitted by Carol and Freddie</i>					
	Kitten	31	49	20	0.9	305	373
	Adult	28	44	28	0.8	232	367
	Light	35	28	37	2.3	309	302
Blue Buffalo	<i>submitted by Lisa Pierson, DVM</i>						
	Chicken & Brown Rice Adult	32	41	28	0.7	264	542
	Chicken & Brown Rice Lite	28	24	48	1.5	276	468
	Hairball	34	39	27	2.1	225	502
Precise Pet	<i>submitted by Dr. Lisa Drapela and Karen &amp; Smokey</i>						
	F. Growth	30	40	30	0.53	222	485
	F. Foundation dry	28	38	34	0.54	218	478
	F. Natural Fish Flavor formula dry	29	45	27	0.52	218	499
	F. Senior dry	28	26	46	0.54	226	442
	F. Light	30	25	45	1.83	279	366
	Precise Plus Feline Adult dry	30	47	23	0.55	242	511
	Precise Plus Feline Hairball	32	46	22	1.5	262	462
Wellness							
	Core	47	42	11	0.6	338	
	Chicken	33	41	26	0.3	264	
	Salmon	33	41	26	0.3	237	
	Kitten Health	33	41	26	0.3	308	
	Feline Dietary Solutions	32	25	43	0.9	215	
	Indoor Health	31	31	38	1.1	222	
Other:							
	Bench & Field Holistic Natural Feline	28	46	26	0.7	223	378
	Blue Buffalo Adult Food	32	41	27	0.7	266	457
	Blue Buffalo Lite Food	29	23	48	1.5	278	383
	California Natural Cat Food (est.)	35	38	27			
	Drs Foster & Smith Kitten	31	45	24		204	500
	Drs Foster & Smith Chicken	32	37	31		221	460
	Drs Foster & Smith Chicken Lite	31	23	46		164	336
	Fancy Feast Chicken & Turkey	30	41	28	0.2		



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Food	% calories from			per 100 kcal		
Fancy Feast Ocean Fish & Salmon	31	41	28	0.2		
Felidae	31	46	23			543
Flint River Ranch	29	45	26	0.4	218	393
Friskies Dry Blend	34	27	38	0.9		336
Friskies Kitten Formula	38	31	32	0.6		356
High Hopes Adult Cat	29	46	25	0.5	207	385
High Hopes Kitten Food	31	48	21	0.4	240	400
High Hopes Senior Cat	29	38	34	0.6	206	342
Natural Balance	30	39	31	0.8	370	553
Nature's Variety Raw Instinct	45	49	7	0.7	418	491
Pinnacle Feline	30	42	28			500
PMI Exclusive Chicken & Rice	29	46	25	0.6	232	
PMI Exclusive Chicken & Rice Light	36	25	39	2.5	314	
Sensible Choice Senior	24	48	28	0.5	168	417
Techni-Cal Adult Lite	30	24	46	2	215	374
Waltham Renal Support	21	43	36	1	79	
Waltham S/O	33	39	28	0.5	252	



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