

## **What should I be feeding my cat?**

It is currently thought that feeding a species appropriate diet, as close to what a cat's natural diet would be, is the healthiest way to feed. We recommend 100% canned food, rotating brands to ensure variety and to prevent nutritional diseases, and preferably higher quality brands (less filler, dyes, additives, preservatives). If your cat won't eat all canned food, remember this general rule: Always try to maximize the amount of canned food and minimize the dry food to the best of your ability and your cat's preferences.

## **Why is canned better than dry?**

1. Canned food is one of the closest options available for mimicking your cats "wild" diet of small prey animals. Most canned food is primarily meat with other ingredients added to ensure the proper level of vitamins and minerals. It is lower in "filler" than most dry foods.
2. Most dry foods have a very high grain (carbohydrate) content. Cats have no known nutritional requirement for carbohydrates. Most common dry food brands, even the "premium" brands, are 30-40% carbohydrate. This is a very unnatural level for cats and may be contributing to some of their common medical problems. Commonly used carbohydrate sources include rice, corn, soy, and wheat. The protein from grains is a lower quality than that of animal protein.
3. Cats that eat canned food get about twice as much water as cats who eat dry food. This is thought to be very important to their overall health and is especially critical to maintaining the health of the kidneys and bladder. Dry food is only about 10% water whereas canned food is near 70% water, the same water content as the average mouse.
4. Changing to a canned food diet can help with many common medical problems in cats including diabetes, urinary tract disease, chronic vomiting, pancreatitis, obesity, and grain allergies.

## **Myth Busters:**

1. **Canned food is bad for my cat's teeth. - FALSE!** Canned food is no worse for the teeth than dry food. The moisture content of the food has very little to do with dental disease.
2. **Dry food helps keep the teeth clean. - FALSE!** Most dry foods do not clean the teeth. This is like your dentist telling you to eat a crunchy cookie or pretzel in lieu of brushing your teeth. In fact, the high carbohydrate content of most dry foods may be a culprit in the development of dental disease. Some dental diets on the market are formulated to scrape the teeth when chewed, however they are typically full of carbohydrates. We recommend using these diets as a treat only.
3. **Canned food will make my cat fat. - FALSE!** Canned food is about 70% water which means it is very low in calories. Your cat can eat a larger volume of canned food, get fewer calories, and feel more satisfied. The high amount of carbohydrates in dry food are stored as fat. Canned food is typically low in carbohydrates, and thus does not turn into fat as easily.