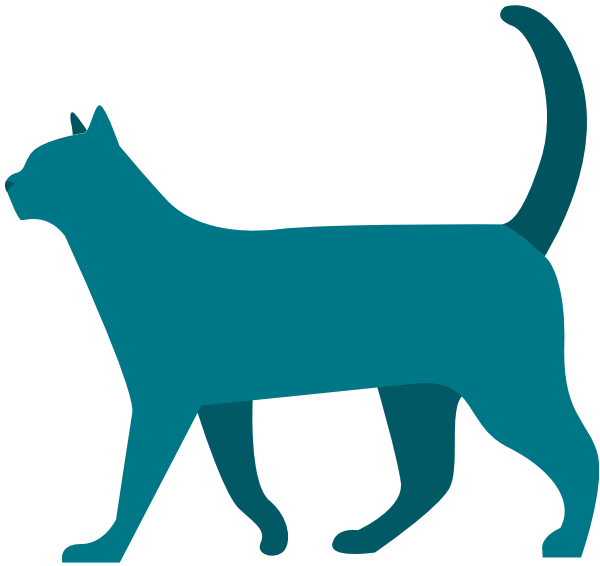


# Feline Nutrition



Cats are **obligate carnivores**. The healthiest option for them is meat, which is the option closest to their natural diet and the diet of their wild cat ancestors. Depending on the amount of time and money you have, the type of food you can provide will differ. However It is important that you feed the best food you can to your new family members (5). This guide is meant to help you make informed decisions about your cat's health. However, it is only an **introduction** and I encourage you to research more which is why I will be providing sources.

**Kittens** should be fed **as much food as they want** at least **3** times a day until they are about one year old. After their first birthday, they can be fed **3-5%** of their body weight per day split between 2-3 meals.

Please contact me if you have any questions about your new cat(s)

Foster Home Contact Info:





## Do NOT feed

### Dry Foods

Cats have naturally **low thirst** because they are meant to get the majority of their water from the prey they consume. Failure to provide adequate moisture in your cat's food puts them in a state of **chronic dehydration** and can lead to serious health issues, including UTIs and kidney stones. If you absolutely have to feed dry, choose a grain-free food with high meat content and add water (2).

### Unbalanced Foods

“raw or cooked, if the diet you're offering your pet is nutritionally unbalanced, it can cause significant, irreversible, and even potentially fatal **health problems**. These include endocrine abnormalities, skeletal issues, and organ degeneration as a result of deficiencies in calcium, trace minerals, and essential fatty acids (2).”

### Semi-Moist Pouched Foods

These products contain **propylene glycol** which is a preservative that is unhealthy for cats and dogs to consume (2).

A common **myth** is that **dry food** is good for a cat or dog's **teeth** because it is crunchy. However, that is equivalent to a saying a human eating crunchy starchy foods keeps our teeth clean(2). If your cat's teeth are building tartar, I suggest giving them **uncooked bone** to chew on, or using some enzyme-based feline toothpaste and a small, **soft-bristled toothbrush** to clean their teeth.



# Over and Underfeeding

UNDER WEIGHT		<p>Ribs may be visible in short coated cats. Bones can be easily felt with minimal or no fat cover. Abdominal tuck after the ribcage is very pronounced. In very thin cats loss of muscle mass may be evident.</p>
IDEAL		<p>Ribs should be easily felt with a slight fat covering and a waist (abdominal tuck after the rib cage) should be seen when viewed from the side and above.</p>
OVER WEIGHT		<p>Cats are classed as overweight if they weigh 10 - 20% more than their ideal body weight.* Ribs cannot be easily felt. The waist is starting to disappear and the back looks broader. The abdomen is starting to become rounder and may begin to sag.</p>
OBESE		<p>Cats are classed as obese if they weigh more than 20% of their ideal body weight.* Ribs are very difficult to feel. Obese cats have a broad back and no waist is visible when viewing from the side or above. Fat deposits are visible around the neck and limbs and the abdomen is large and sagging.</p>

\* Toll P, et al. 2010 . Obesity. In: Hand M, et al. 2010., (eds). Small Animal Clinical Nutrition, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Topeka, KS : Mark Morris Institute p501

## Pet Foods from Best to Worst:

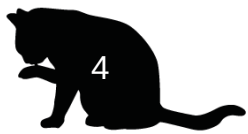
(From veterinarian and pet nutrition specialist Dr. Karen Becker)

**1** “**Nutritionally balanced raw homemade diet.** This is the best diet you can feed your dog or cat. It's very important not to wing it when preparing your pet's meals at home. I say this because when pet food nutrition expert Steve Brown and I analyzed many of the homemade and prey model diets available, we learned they fall far short in trace minerals, antioxidants including nutrients like manganese, magnesium, vitamin E and D, copper, zinc, iron, choline, and essential fatty acids.

Additionally, if the diet doesn't have a proper fat or calcium to phosphorus balance, it can actually cause a myriad of health problems, especially in growing animals. So, it's critically important that you know your homemade diet is balanced(2).”

...

I've provided instructions on how to make raw homemade food and additional resources on the topic. This is the type of food that I feed my fosters as well as my own cat.



**2 Nutritionally balanced cooked homemade diet.** "This option gives you all of the benefits of the homemade raw diet above, minus the benefits of the free enzymes and phytonutrients found in living foods.(2)."

**3 Commercially available balanced raw food diet.** "Again, it's critically important that the diet be balanced. There are a lot of raw diets on the market these days that are nutritionally incomplete. These foods should say right on the label, 'For supplemental or intermittent feeding.' I don't recommend feeding unbalanced foods without adding in the missing nutrients, or your pet can have nutrition-related medical problems in the future.

Commercially available balanced raw food diets are found in the freezer section of small or privately owned pet boutiques. Some big-box stores are now starting to carry a larger selection of frozen raw diets, and you can also find an excellent selection online(2)."

...

**4 Dehydrated or freeze-dried raw diet.** "If you can't or don't want to feed fresh raw food, a good alternative is a dehydrated freeze-dried raw diet that is reconstituted with water. These diets are shelf-stable so they're very convenient. To make them biologically appropriate, all you have to do is add water.

Dehydrated or freeze-dried raw diets haven't been processed at high temperatures. In many cases, the nutrient value has been retained minus a balanced fatty acid profile(2)."

**5 Commercially available cooked or refrigerated food.** "These diets have been gently heat-processed so the proteins are slightly denatured, but the moisture content is excellent. The food is fresher than processed diets, so the nutrient content is better than choices lower on this list. You'll find these foods in the refrigerated section of pet stores, and in many human grocery stores as well.

The quality of raw materials in refrigerated pet food ranges from absolutely terrible to excellent, so you do need to do some research before choosing which brand to buy(2)

...

**6 Human-grade canned food.** "If the package label or the manufacturer's website doesn't say the ingredients are human grade, you should assume they are not. Pet food made with human grade ingredients is a great deal more expensive than feed-grade or animal-grade canned food. These foods will typically be found in boutiques and small independent retailers that focus on high-quality foods(2)."



**7 Super premium canned food.** "These products are typically found at big-box stores like Petco and PetSmart, or a conventional veterinary clinic. These diets contain feed-grade ingredients (which mean foods not approved for human consumption). But, the moisture content is much more biologically correct than dry food. Many have excellent protein, fat, fiber, and carb ratios.  
... (2)"

## What The Words on Pet Food Packaging Mean: (FDA regulations)

### THE '95%' RULE

applies to products consisting primarily of very few ingredients. They have simple names, such as '**Beef for Dogs**' or '**Tuna Cat Food.**' In these examples, at least 95% of the product must be the named ingredient (beef or tuna, respectively), not counting the water added for processing and 'condiments.' (3)

### THE '25%' OR 'DINNER' RULE

requires that the named ingredients comprise at least, but less than 95% of the product (not counting the water for processing). The name must include a qualifying descriptive term, such as 'Dinner' as in 'Beef Dinner for Dogs.' Counting the added water, the named ingredients still must comprise **10%** of the product. Many descriptors other than '**dinner**' are used, however, with '**Platter,**' '**Entree,**' '**Nuggets**' and '**Formula**' being a few examples. (3)

### THE '3%' OR 'WITH' RULE

...the AAFCO model regulations now allow use of the term '**with**;' as part of the product name, such as 'Dog Food With Beef' or 'Cat Food With Chicken.' (3)

### "THE 'FLAVOR' RULE

**a specific percentage is not required**, but a product must contain an amount sufficient to be able to be detected...For example, the corresponding ingredient may be beef, but more often it is another substance that will give the characterizing flavor, such as beef meal or beef by-products...Only a small amount of a 'chicken digest' is needed to produce a '**Chicken Flavored Cat Food,**' even though **no actual chicken** is added to the food. (3)



## Making Raw Cat Food

### CONS:

- it takes time and effort to make
- you have to make sure it is balanced

### PROS:

- your new pet is used to this type of food
- it is relatively inexpensive to make
- it is the healthiest option for your pet
- it saves you money from future medical bills
- cats love eating it
- raw-fed cats poop less often and it doesn't smell as bad when they do
- it is easy to adjust homemade raw food if your pet ever develops any food allergies

### 80/10/10

Follow a ratio by weight of:

**80%** muscle meat (~1/8th of which should be hearts)

**10%** raw bone (never feed cooked bones, they can splinter and damage the digestive tract)

**10%** secreting organ (  $\geq 5\%$  liver)

### Variety

You should vary the muscle meat proteins you use in order to keep things interesting for your pet as well as ensure a **variety of nutrients**. I use chicken, pork, and beef most because they are easily available(4).

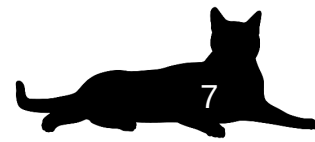
### Taurine

A naturally occurring **amino acid** found only in muscle meat, organs, and seafood. The harder working a muscle is, the more concentrated its taurine content. Cats are unable to synthesize taurine from other amino acids. Without sufficient taurine from their diet, cats can develop central retinal degeneration, reproductive failure and impaired fetal development, or heart cardiomyopathy(7).

### Support

Here is a Facebook **group** for raw feeders. This group has been a tremendous help for me because it is full of experienced raw-feeders from around the world who are happy to answer any of your questions

Cats Completely Raw And Proud (Cat CRAP)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CatCrap/>



# Sample Recipe

\*this ingredient is optional, but recommended

## Chicken Recipe (w/ bone meal)

3 lbs	Raw Chicken hearts and gizzards
5 lbs	Raw Chicken thighs (boneless)
1 lb	Raw Chicken livers
.25 lbs	Food Grade bone meal
~ 4-5 cups	Water or bone broth ( <b>NO</b> onion or garlic)
5	*Raw, whole eggs
3 cans	*Sardines in water (no salt added)

## Chicken Recipe (with bone)

3 lbs	Raw Chicken hearts and gizzards
4 lbs	Raw Chicken thighs (boneless)
1 lb	Raw chicken livers
2.3 lbs	Raw chicken wings (w/bones)
~ 4-5 cups	Water or bone broth ( <b>NO</b> onion or garlic)
5	*Raw, whole eggs
3 cans	*Sardines in water (no salt added)

All ingredients can be **chopped or ground**, then **mixed**. Refrigerate a few days' worth and freeze the rest. Adult cats can get up to 1 inch chunks, but kittens need to work up their way up to that size.

To add variety, you can use these recipes and simply replace the chicken thigh with pork, beef, duck, turkey, basically whatever muscle meat you would like. I would not recommend replacing the chicken thigh with chicken breast however because it has a lower **taurine** content. Also, because of their high **mercury** content, **fish** should only be given **occasionally** as a treat and **some fish must be cooked!** Sardines are an exception on both accounts.

## Works Cited

[1]<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6380542>

[2]<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2015/11/08/best-to-worst-pet-food-types.aspx>

[3]<https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/resourcesforyou/ucm047113.htm>

[4]<http://www.petmd.com/cat/nutrition/can-cats-have-raw-food-diet>

[5]<http://feline-nutrition.org/nutrition/just-what-is-raw-feeding-anyway>

[6]<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2013/04/01/raw-food-diet-part-1.aspx>

[7] <https://feline-nutrition.org/nutrition/no-bull-aurine-is-a-must-for-kitty>