

NUTRITION

Feeding your cat a high quality diet which contains optimal levels of vitamins and minerals will have many health benefits.

Cats are **obligate carnivores** and must have meat or fish in their diet to obtain essential nutrients. Homemade vegetarian diets are contra-indicated for cats and will cause serious health problems. For example, the amino acid *taurine* is only found in proteins of animal origin and deficiency in cats causes blindness and heart disease.

It is preferable to feed a commercial diet which has been rigorously tested for nutritional content and will contain optimum levels of vitamins and minerals. Giving the occasional treat of coley or chicken breast is absolutely fine. Frequent feeding of liver should be avoided as this causes excessive vitamin A absorption which can lead to vertebrae in the spine fusing together.

Your cat's nutritional requirements will vary according to *life stage*;

kitten (up to 1 year old)

adult (1-7 years) or

senior (over 7 years old)..

Kittens need more protein and have higher energy requirements than adults so kitten foods are higher in fat.

Adult cats' requirements will vary according to their lifestyle. Sedentary cats are more likely to become obese. Certain cat foods, particularly the highly palatable premium brands, can be higher in fat.

Dental disease often develops in adult cats fed certain diets, as the food adheres to the tooth enamel and leads to the formation of plaque and then tartar. Gum disease can allow bacteria to enter the bloodstream and could impact on your cat's health. In most cats it is extremely difficult to attempt tooth-brushing so it is preferable to feed a diet that reduces plaque formation in the first place.

Senior cats benefit from controlled levels of sodium and phosphorus to protect their kidneys.

There are several high quality life stage diets available for your cat. We prefer the **Vet Essentials** range from **Hills Science Plan**, as it has clinically proven health benefits and contains no artificial additives or preservatives. The unique **plaque-removing kibble** acts like a tooth-brush when chewed, gently scrubbing away bacteria-laden tartar to support good dental health and freshen breath. This range contains no artificial preservatives, flavours or colours.

However, there are several good feline diets available, such as the Royal Canin and original Hill's Science Plan ranges. We can order almost any diet for delivery within 24 hours to the surgery so please ask us if you would like us to order your cat's food.

KITTEN- The first few months are vital for your kitten's lifelong health and Hill's Vet Essentials Kitten is specially formulated to address her essential health needs;

Development: Proven levels of DHA(omega 3 fatty acid, naturally found in mother's milk) that help support the visual and brain development along with a balance and minerals and omega-3 fatty acids to help growing bones and joints.

Immunity- Clinically proven antioxidants with high levels of vitamin E to support a healthy immune system.

Digestion- Highly Digestible proteins and a balance of fibres to support a healthy digestive tract.

Urinary- Helps maintain health urinary tract through controlled mineral and ph levels.

Oral health- Precise balance of vitamins and minerals for healthy development of teeth.

Skin and Coat- High levels of omega-6 fatty acids help promote healthy skin and a shiny coat.

YOUNG ADULT CAT (1-6 years)- When your cat reaches adulthood, she will have her own specific nutritional needs to keep her in peak condition and help her live a long and active life. Hill's Vet Essentials young adult diet addresses the essential health needs of adult cats;

Dental unique kibble technology that provides a clinically proven cleaning action.

Weight- Appropriate levels of protein and Fat to help maintain ideal weight.

Urinary- - Helps maintain health urinary tract through controlled mineral and ph levels.

Skin and Coat- High levels of omega-6 fatty acids help promote healthy skin and a shiny coat.

Digestion- Highly Digestible proteins and a balance of fibres to support a healthy digestive tract.

MATURE ADULT (over 7 years)- As your cat gets older, her metabolism may alter, along with other changes such as the level of exercise she needs. Hill's Science plan Vet Essentials Mature Adult is specially formulated to address the essential health needs of older cats:

Vital Organs- Controlled levels of sodium and phosphorus to support healthy vital organ function, particularly kidneys.

Dental unique kibble technology that provides a clinically proven cleaning action.

Urinary- - Helps maintain health urinary tract through controlled mineral and ph levels. .

Digestion- Highly Digestible proteins and a balance of fibres to support a healthy digestive tract. **Weight**- Appropriate levels of protein and Fat to help maintain ideal weight

PRESCRIPTION DIETS

Diet forms an important part of therapy for many feline diseases. For example Hills m/d diet for diabetes mellitus or hill's c/d for cystitis. You may be prescribed these diets on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the condition.