



## FEEDING YOUR

## NEW KITTEN

Your kitten is eating: DRY FOOD \_\_\_\_\_

WET FOOD \_\_\_\_\_ X's a day.

The first year of life for kittens, like children, is most important when it comes to feeding them a nutritious diet, bones, teeth and muscles, etc., are growing at an unbelievably rapid pace. Before you know it, they've matured into a beautiful adult cat. Because of this rapid growth, it is very important to provide them with highly, nutritious food, thus ensuring them a long, healthy life. Many of your grocery-store brands are replete of additive and preservatives with little nutritional value in comparison to most of the foods sold at your local pet food store.

Your new kitten has been fed a nutritious dry food; so please, its VERY IMPORTANT YOU DO NOT CHANGE THEIR DIETS. Abruptly changing their diet can easily upset their systems, including, but not limited to diarrhea. Excitement on adoption day, unfamiliar faces, vaccinations, etc., can also affect, it is important to continue them on the foods their systems are accustomed to. Abruptly changing their diet can cause diarrhea.

Leave a bowl of their dry kibble in an easy to reach spot, so they can freely feed throughout the day. If only crumbs are left in the bottom, dump them and refill the bowl. Don't worry about giving them too much; they eat small portions throughout the day.

Kittens are carnivorous (not humans or dogs). Because of their rapid growth, as discussed above, kittens require extra calories, fats and proteins that canned foods provide. Twice a day, offer them a quarter of a 5.5 oz. can of ground chicken, turkey or lamb&rice into a separate dish (breaking it up with a fork). Note: Warming the covered food in the microwave makes it more palatable to your little one. Keep in mind that microwaving may create hot spots; so stir it well. If your kitten is not eating much dry food, you may have to compensate with extra canned food. Just don't overdo it! Again, too much canned food can cause diarrhea, which can lead to serious dehydration.

**By the time your kitten is approximately 11-12 months old, it is ready to switch to an adult food.** Make sure the adult food is high quality. Keep in mind, the higher the protein the less waste. Most importantly, make sure the ash content is between 5-6%. Less is better.

**To make the change**, mix your dry foods: 1<sup>st</sup> week – ¾ kitten to ¼ adult; 2<sup>nd</sup> week – ½ each. By the third week, your teenaged kitten should have made the transition to an adult food without duress. Cats don't easily accept abrupt changes in their lives. Everything must be done gradually- even moving, changing the furniture, or moving the litter box, etc. They are truly creatures of habit.

**Note** Cats/kittens should always have fresh water available to them – changing it 2-3 times daily. If you've adopted a male kitten, make sure the kitten-to-adult food change is done no later than 9 months. Males are prone to cystitis (bladder infection) more than females because of body chemistry, too much ash in their diets, and not consuming enough water. A good source of water is canned food, which is 78% moisture. Cystitis can be very painful, dangerous and extremely costly to treat; so use great care in feeding your males. (Signs of cystitis: Frequent litter box use, crying while urinating, lethargy, loss of appetite and smaller clumps of urine than usually found in the litter box.) If you suspect a problem, take your cat immediately to the vet. **How long should you keep your kitten on canned food** is the question most asked. Just because they've grown up doesn't mean they don't need canned food anymore. Cutting it down to once a day by the time they are 8-9 mos. is sufficient. Do you need to increase the portion? No. By this age it is more a treat than a dietary necessity. Remember though, it provides them with fluid.