



TRANSITIONING YOUR CAT TO CANNED OR RAW FOOD

Dry food is convenient and easy to serve, but increasingly veterinarians are concluding that cats who eat a dry food only diet are more likely to suffer from obesity, diabetes, kidney problems and urinary blockages. To remedy this, they recommend a diet higher in both meat and moisture, notably canned or raw food. Transitioning away from the crunchy stuff can be challenging, but is well worth the effort.

Cats make their eating decisions with their noses, and the strong-smelling flavor enhancers added to dry foods can spoil their appreciation for milder smelling canned or raw foods. This can be overcome with these two steps:

1. PICK UP THE OLD FOOD AT NIGHT AND INTRODUCE A NEW FOOD THE NEXT MORNING.

A cat who is free-fed and thus never hungry has little biological incentive to try something new, especially if it doesn't smell like food or if it's a different texture. So, after the evening meal, remove all remnants of food, wash the dish and leave the feeding area clean. The next morning, introduce a small amount of canned or raw food. Use a flat dish, not a bowl, for easier access.

2. BEGIN THE TRANSITION WITH A STRONG-SMELLING MOIST FOOD.

Canned food is more aromatic than raw, so it's easier to begin there. Fish based or gamey flavors are best. Several brands and flavors may need to be tried, as minor differences in ingredients can make a big difference to a cat's palate. Later on, try to mix in different meat sources to avoid a diet of exclusively fish based food.

These two steps alone work in about 80% of cats. But if they don't work for your kitty, here are some advanced techniques:

- Sprinkle some salmon or chicken treats on top of the canned or raw
- Add some warm water to create a "gravy" that cats can lap up

- Crush some of the dry food and sprinkle it on top of the canned or raw
- Add 3 granules of salt
- Mix a little canned food in with their dry
- Add the juice from a can of your favorite tuna
- Add a little crushed freeze-dried chicken on top of canned food

Success will vary based on many factors—how long has your cat been eating dry food? Has your cat ever experienced canned food? Sometimes the texture of the food will influence success, sometimes flavor, sometimes brand.

The transition can work overnight, or may take days or even weeks, but it can be done! Even though we recommend the human grade, quality foods that we carry, some grocery store brands can work because of their strong aromas.



QUESTIONS?

For one-on-one help, please ask one of our pet care specialists. Most of us had to apply the same methods to successfully transition our cats to canned food. Websites with more information include rawfedkitty.org, blakkatz.com and littlebigcat.com

allthebestpetcare.com

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