

## Feeding Your New Cat

Unless on a prescription diet, all cats at HSCC are fed a wet food diet (**one 3oz can 2 x day**) of any brand that is donated (usually Friskies). If they are housed with other cats, they also have constant access to a bowl of dry food.

**What to feed:** Whenever possible, HSCC always recommends a primarily wet food diet. Wet food naturally provides more water in the diet, which supports the kidneys, urinary tract, and overall health, and it contains more meat/protein and less carbohydrates than dry food.

When you first bring a new cat home, you may need to experiment with a few different kinds of food to find what they like best--try getting a few different varieties of meats (turkey, salmon, tuna, etc.) and different textures (pate, chunks in gravy). Keep in mind that cats are carnivores (meat-eaters) and should be eating meat exclusively (no corn or fillers). Before selecting a diet, be sure to look at the ingredient list, paying particular attention to the first three [ingredients](#)--the first ingredient listed should be meat or meat meal (not a by-product).



Cats can be finicky eaters, so it can be challenging to transition them from one diet to another. The best technique to easily transition a cat to a new food is to mix the new cat food with the existing diet and slowly increase the amount of the new food over time. A slow transition will help the digestive system adjust to the new food without causing indigestion, vomiting, diarrhea or other gastrointestinal upset.

**If you need to transition your cat to a new diet, use this chart to facilitate a gradual transition:**

*\*Progress only if your cat continues to eat! If s/he stops eating or has diarrhea or vomit, move back a step & progress more slowly with the diet change. See your vet if s/he doesn't eat for more than 2 days*

**Day 1 and 2:** Mix ¼ of the new diet and ¾ of the current diet  
**Day 3 and 4:** Mix ½ of the new diet and ½ of the current diet  
**Day 5 and 6:** Mix ¾ of the new diet and ¼ of the current diet  
**Day 7:** Full amount of the new diet!

**How to feed:** Feed equal measured amounts twice daily (morning and evening), and be sure to discard any uneaten wet food after a few hours. If your cat *does not* have any weight concerns, you may also leave out dry food for snacking. No matter what you feed your cat, do it in moderation -- overweight cats are susceptible to developing diabetes, joint problems, and will not be able to move or groom themselves normally! Help your cat stay healthy through a high quality diet and lots of exercise.



[Food puzzles and toys](#) are a safe, easy way to provide enrichment for your cat and satisfy their hunting instinct. Many great options, suitable for any diet, are available online, in pet supply stores, or can be made at home. Food puzzles can even help you manage behavior issues in cats, like hyperactivity or destructive behavior. See our handout on ["Play Therapy"](#) for more details!

**Protip:** Does your cat ignore the water bowl or paw at it? Try a [cat water fountain](#)! They have filters to keep the water fresh, and the sight and sound of flowing water is very appealing to our feline friends.