

HOW DO I GET MY CAT TO EAT YOUR FOOD?

By Beth Thibodeau

Sometimes customers who purchase our raw cat food intending to improve their cat's diet are dismayed when their cat refuses to eat the food, favoring instead the usual kibble. Cats are creatures of habit and are not always fond of diet changes, especially if the change is to something completely different from their usual food. Some customers expect their cats to "instinctively" recognize a raw diet as "healthy" or "what they would eat in the wild." Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Some cats dive right into the raw food without a second glance, but for those cats that are resistant to that change, what can an owner do? Transitioning a cat onto a raw diet can take a lot of time, patience, and persistence, but the cats will eventually make the change if you are diligent and consistent. In the beginning, it may be a good idea to use our Turkey recipe to transition because there is no garlic, which can sometimes be a turn-off. Here are some suggestions that have met with success:

1. Put a very small amount of the raw food next to the old food in the morning. Leave the food there all day and remove it in the evening. The next day, start over again with another tiny amount in the bowl. This is exposing the cat to the smell and texture of the new food. There is no danger of your cat eating spoiled food, because they will not be eating it at first. Continue doing this every day until the cat starts to try the food. When you start to notice your cat trying the new food, decrease the old food and increase the amount of raw food in the bowl in the morning. This constant exposure to the food will help the cat recognize the raw food as food. This may take a while to accomplish, but it is worth the wait.
2. Put some of the new food on your finger and let your cat lick it off. Another technique would be to put a tiny bit of food on the cat's paw (or chin, or inside the cheek) and let the cat lick it off. Sometimes just getting the food past the nose is all it takes to get your cat to try the new food. If your cat seemed to enjoy her little taste, make sure to leave a tiny amount in her bowl next to her old food. Increase the amount as she starts eating more of it and decrease the old food at the same time.

Some people want to take up the old food from the beginning and just offer the raw. This is fine if your cat will eat the food, but if she refuses, it is not wise to let her go without food for more than a day. Cats, especially senior cats, can quickly develop "fatty liver disease" (hepatic lipidosis) if they go without food for more than 24 hours. This condition can be reversed in most cases, but it is best not to let it happen.

Once your cat starts to eat the food on a regular basis, try to establish set feeding times. Cats do not need constant exposure to food as the kibble companies have led us to believe. Instead, try to do 2-3 feedings per day or whatever favors your schedule.

Switching to a raw diet is extremely beneficial to cats because of the natural enzymes in the raw meat. You will first notice a difference in the texture of her coat and most likely a new spring in her step (especially noticeable in older cats). There will also be less clean-up in the litter box because the cat's body utilizes more of the food. By making the switch to a raw diet, your cat will be on the way to a better way of life with fewer health issues.