

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DIET TRANSITION IN CATS

Cats can have very strong individual preferences for diet and transition to a new diet can sometimes be quite challenging, but a number of considerations might help support a successful diet transition.

- Consider any dietary preferences:
 - Is a wet or a dry food preferred, or a combination of both?
 - If your cat prefers wet food, do they prefer chunks in a gravy or jelly, or a mousse?
 - Do they have any flavour preferences?
- Introduce the diet in a non-stressful environment:
 - Try to find a quiet area at home, away from other pets, loud noises, or any litter trays.
 - Ensure your cat has their own food bowl (cats don't like to share!)
 - If your cat has come home from the veterinary practice with a new diet, depending on the condition the diet is being recommended for, it may be better to give time for him/her to fully settle before introducing.
 - Consider using feline pheromones, which may help reduce stress and make cats feel more secure
 - Don't stand over your cat – most cats prefer time and space to accept their new food.
- Consider diet introduction in a new bowl (next to a bowl with the old food), or occasionally by mixing the new and old foods.
 - The amount of old food should gradually be reduced and amount of new food increased over 7-10 days.
 - Most cats prefer two separate food bowls, rather than mixing of the food.
 - Sometimes, the transition can take much longer than 7-10 days so don't become disheartened. Some cats may take a month or longer to accept a new food.
- Ensure your cat does not seem nauseous (for example, going to the food bowl then turning away). If you are concerned about nausea, speak to your vet.
- Avoid food aversions by administering any medications in a different, highly palatable food, at a separate time to the cat's main meal.
- Serve food at room temperature or above. If only part of a pouch or can is given at a meal, ensure it is stored in the fridge and disposed of after 24 hours if not used. Bring it up to room temperature before serving: cats generally don't like chilled foods.
- If feeding wet food, gentle heating to increase the aroma may help.
- Ensure food is always fresh, particularly wet food.
 - Dispose of wet food not eaten after 30 minutes and try again later in the day.
- Consider location and height of food bowls:
 - Locate food bowls away from water bowls or litter trays.
 - If your cat suffers from conditions such as osteoarthritis, slight elevation of the food bowl off the floor might increase comfort when eating.
- Palatability enhancers may be helpful e.g. PRO PLAN® Fortiflora (a probiotic supplement which many cats also find highly palatable).

