



The Indoor Carnivore

An obligate **ob-li-gate** [adj. ob-li-geyt] **car-ni-vore** [noun kahr-nuh-vohr] (or a true) carnivore is an animal that must eat meat in order to thrive. Just like leopards, lions and tigers, the domestic cat is a prime example of an obligate or true carnivore and has no nutritional requirement for carbohydrates or other vegetable matter in their diet.

True carnivores lack the physiology required for the proper utilization of vegetable matter and, in fact, some carnivorous mammals eat vegetation specifically as an emetic (to induce vomiting).

The average nutrient profile of what a cat would consume in the wild is 50-54% animal protein, 22-26% animal fat and less than 5% carbohydrates. If you examine any of the Young Again food labels you will see that all of our cat foods fall within these nutrient profiles.

	Juvenile Mouse	Young Again Zero Carb Cat Food	Young Again 50/22 Cat Food	Young Again Mature Health Cat Food	Young Again Zero Carb Mature Health
Analysis					
Protein %	50-54	52	50	54	52
Fat %	22-26	26	22	22	24
Carbs - digestible	3-4%	ZERO	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	ZERO

Meat is acidic meaning that the pH is less than 7.0 (which is a neutral pH) and plant material is alkaline (with a pH of greater than 7.0). The urinary tract of a cat needs to be acidic, not alkaline. If the urine of a cat is alkaline then a cat is likely to develop crystals. In a 2004 study* when carbohydrates were added to a cat's food, crystals in the urine increased and urine volume decreased. Low urine volume means that the urine specific gravity (concentration) of minerals will go up. This increases the likelihood that those minerals will precipitate out and form stones or crystals in the cat's bladder or other portions of the urinary tract. Recent studies by the University of Minnesota show it is essential that the specific gravity of a feline's urine stay below 1.030 to prevent stones and crystals. All Young Again feline diets will result in an average urine specific gravity of 1.020. See our papers on Uroliths/Crystals and Hydration: Wet vs. Dry Food.

Carbohydrates also digest more quickly than animal protein in the gastrointestinal tract of cats, resulting in cats eating more often than they would if they were only consuming animal protein. Overeating (consuming more calories than are burned in a day) will always lead to obesity and will greatly increase the likelihood of a cat developing a more serious condition like diabetes, kidney disease, stones and/or crystals. Overweight cats do not only overconsume calories,

Study reference:
Am J Vet Res. 2004 Feb;65(2): 138-42

they also consume more minerals than required by their bodies for normal metabolism. Almost all cats that develop diabetes are eating a diet containing 20-35% carbs when they are diagnosed. Young Again Zero Carb Cat Food has shown a high remission rate in pre-diabetic and diabetic cats. About 85% of those diabetic cats will go into remission within months of feeding only our Zero carb formula. Carbs should be avoided at all costs for these diabetic-prone felines. Many prescription diabetic cat foods contain more than 15% carbs.

Because most cats live in the house (meaning a controlled environment), they are not free to do what they want, when they want. Oh sure, they can take a nap in the sun, lay on the magazine you are trying to read or play, but if their food bowls are empty or even half empty, they cannot hunt and procure more food without your help. How many times has your cat dragged you to her bowl and demanded more food, even though there is still food left in the bowl?

What do you think they do when the bowl is less than half-full and you're not home? Because their natural instinct demands that they must depend on themselves, not you for their food, a half-empty bowl looks like the end of the world! They can't reason that you will fill the bowl like always, instead they will eat the remaining food before someone else does. Even a house cat with no other cats to compete with for food will eat the remaining food in the bowl, preparing for a coming food shortage.

That said, if your cat perceives that the house has an abundance of food (no half-full bowls allowed) she will be content and not overeat. Always remember that your cat is an obligate carnivore. Feed only animal protein/fat and never more than 5% carbs.

Feeding a carnivore-based food and keeping the bowl full will do more to ensure the health of your cat than any other single thing you can do.

Cats are independent and driven to be self-sufficient by nature. The only thing your cat cannot control in the home is the acquisition of more food, so make sure that she always has a full bowl. By understanding and working with the natural instincts of our cats, we can improve their lives and make their home a better place. Implement these simple changes and within three months, you'll see a healthier, happier cat. Her coat will become softer and her activity level and overall health will be evident from feeding Young Again Cat Food. Please see our paper on free-choice feeding.

