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**THE PET HEALTH LIBRARY**

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**Diet for the Diabetic Cat**

It is now well known that optimal dietary management for diabetic cats consists of a high protein / low carbohydrate diet, a completely different strategy than what is recommended for diabetic dogs. Appropriate foods may be either canned or dry and are probably best fed in meals as has been traditionally recommended though there are some exceptions. The following guidelines have been suggested.

- Obese cats will have to lose weight in order to achieve regulation. High protein / low carbohydrate diets are excellent for this purpose. Once an appropriate food has been selected, equal amounts should be fed approximately 12 hours apart just prior to insulin injections. Feeding meals discourages snacking and helps with weight loss.
- Obese cats should not lose more than 2% of their body weight per week. If they do, they are at high risk for developing hepatic lipidosis, a form of liver failure. This is a serious complication and should be avoided. If your cat is losing weight too quickly, notify your veterinarian.
- Skinny diabetic cats may have food left out at all times.
- The diet in question should be relatively high in arginine. Arginine is an amino acid that is stimulatory to the pancreatic beta cells that secrete insulin. Most meat-based proteins are high in arginine.
- The diet in question should be relatively high in L-carnitine, a biochemical that assists in transporting fats into cells to facilitate metabolism.

There are several therapeutic diets designed specifically to meet these guidelines. Ask your veterinarian which one is best for your cat.

**Canned Foods**

Most canned foods for cats are made to be adequately high in protein/low in carbohydrate. Here is a list should your cat find the therapeutic diets unacceptable.

Compare foods on the list for high protein content and low carbohydrate content.

If a canned food you are looking for is not there, it might be on their "old" page:

**Dry Foods**

Dry alternatives to the therapeutic diets are difficult to find as you will see from this list but there are a few.

*Date Published: 2/11/2010 12:00:00 PM*



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