

Tips for feeding your cat

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FEED MY CAT?



Species-appropriate feeding is crucial for the well-being and health of our cats. But how often should a cat be fed each day and how can its natural feeding rhythm be integrated into everyday life? This guide gives you valuable tips on the right feeding frequency, type of food and amount of food - adapted to different phases of your cat's life and needs. Find out how to fulfil your cat's natural instincts and provide it with the best possible care, whether it's an outdoor cat, an indoor cat or a cat with special health requirements.

How often do cats eat in the wild?

In order to better assess the requirements of domestic cats, it is worth taking a look at their wild relatives: **Big cats such as lions and tigers kill large prey** and can easily **eat a whole day or even several days' worth of food** from one portion. The situation is somewhat different for **small wild cats, strays or farm cats**: On the one hand, they have a **smaller stomach** and, on the other, their **prey is many times smaller**. This is because they are solitary hunters and do not hunt large animals in groups. **In order to cover their daily food requirements**, they must therefore **regularly go hunting again**. This means that active free-rangers can **eat ten or more meals a day**.

Hunger is not the only factor that determines the number of prey animals

In nature, a predator rarely knows when the next opportunity for prey will arise. However, instinct tells them to take advantage of every opportunity. **Cats therefore sometimes hunt even when they are not hungry**. As a result, cats simply play with their prey without consuming it.

How often should cats be fed?

It is not advisable to feed your cat once a day. This contradicts the natural **need for several morsels**. **The cat's digestive tract is also designed for smaller portions**. Feeding several times a day can, however, be a challenge for cats that do not go outside in normal everyday life.

Our tips for feeding cats:

- Establish two to three fixed feeding times per day
- Feed a small portion of wet food at each of these times
- Offer an additional small amount of dry food for free consumption
- Alternatively, you can hide some dry food in suitable cat toys. This provides additional activity and variety in your cat's everyday life.
- Is your cat a slow eater or only eats small portions throughout the day? Then a combination of wet food and dry food is ideal.

How long can a cat go without food?



Regular feeding is essential for your cat's health (© deuka companion).

Theoretically, a cat can survive up to four weeks without food. However, organ damage can occur in such cases. A regular supply of food is necessary for the physiological functioning of the internal organs. Therefore, a cat must **not go without food even over a weekend**. **Automatic feeders** are a good solution for indoor cats that regularly have to spend long periods alone. A timer can be used to set when a certain amount of cat food is released. Drinking fountains for cats are also a sensible measure and can help to ensure the supply of food.

Outdoor cats - how often should I feed them?

Feeding outdoor cats **can vary considerably**. While **some cats only do a few laps around the garden**, others scour a **huge territory** and therefore have a higher energy consumption. **Some of them are not interested in prey at all**. Others cover a **large part of their food requirements** with mice and the like. Their food requirements vary accordingly when they return to their cosy home.

For some free-roaming cats, a bowl of dry food from which they nibble every now and then is **enough**. Others, on the other hand, need **larger amounts of food than indoor cats due to their high energy**

consumption when outdoors.

There is a rule of thumb for estimating the right amount of food: keep an eye on your cat's physical condition. It is best to weigh your cat regularly in order to adjust the amount of food and the number of meals in good time.

How often should a cat with kidney problems be fed?

Cats with kidney problems often have a reduced appetite. If you also switch to a protein- and phosphate-reduced food (e.g. **FLORIE Urinary**), it can be a greater challenge to motivate the cat to eat enough food. In these cases, you should **offer a bowl of food several times a day and allow sufficient time for the change of food. At least three weeks is ideal.** The new food gradually replaces the old food during this time. By warming the food slightly or adding flavourful additives such as tuna juice, you can improve the cat's acceptance.

How often should I feed kittens?

Kittens have an extremely small stomach. At the same time, they have a **high energy requirement** due to **their growth** and exuberant play. They therefore need **five to six meals a day** in their first few months of life . **With the help of special kitten food (e.g. FLORIE Kitten), the special requirements of small kittens can be optimally met.** In the course of their first year of life, you can gradually reduce the number of meals to the usual two to three meals per day.

How much food does a cat need per day?

How often and how much food a cat needs depends on several factors:

Age of the cat

Kittens have a high energy requirement and therefore need to be fed at least five times a day. For adult cats, you can reduce the number of feedings to two or three; for older cats, illnesses may make it necessary to shorten the feeding intervals again.

Weight of the cat

A petite cat weighing two to three kilograms needs significantly less food than a Norwegian Forest cat weighing seven to eight kilograms, for example.

Wet food vs. dry food

Due to the low amount of moisture, **dry food** is much more concentrated in nutrients and contains more energy than **wet food**. In direct comparison, cats therefore need less dry food than wet food.

Nutritional content of the cat food

A smaller amount of a high-quality cat food that is higher in energy and protein is usually sufficient to cover the cat's nutritional requirements. In contrast, a larger quantity of a lower-energy food is often required to ensure the same nutrient supply.

Outdoor cat vs. indoor cat

Indoor cats are usually much less active than outdoor cats. They therefore consume less energy and require a smaller amount of food. However, the amount of food they need also depends on whether and how much prey they catch while travelling.

Neutered cats

Neutered cats often have more appetite, but tend to be less agile, which is why their energy requirements are significantly lower. In most cases, it is therefore advisable to reduce the usual ration by 10 to 20 per cent.

Pregnancy and rearing of the kittens

During this time, energy requirements are extremely high. Therefore, food should be available to the cat around the clock so that it can have a nibble at any time.

Feeding a cat properly - how does it work?

There are different ways to feed cats. Depending on what you choose, the number of meals will also vary. The two most common feeding methods are restrictive and ad libitum feeding - or a combination of both.

Ad libitum feeding

The term "ad libitum" comes from Latin and means "at will". In relation to feeding your cat, this means that they can eat as often and as much as they like. **Her bowl is filled more or less around the clock.**

However, this only works with dry food. Wet food that is not eaten within a certain period of time spoils and is unattractive to the cat.

One disadvantage of this feeding method is that not all cats know exactly when it is enough for them. Neutered cats in particular tend to eat too much due to their increased appetite. This can quickly lead to obesity, which, according to vets, affects almost half of all cats. This form of feeding therefore only makes

sense for cats with a **high energy consumption (e.g. kittens, pregnant and nursing cats, very active cats or cats that are too thin)**. You should therefore always keep an eye on your cat's physical condition. Ideally, you should be able to feel the cat's ribs, but not see them.

Restrictive feeding

Most cat parents opt for **a defined amount of food that is available to the animal for a certain period of time**. This form of feeding enables better weight control. If possible, you should spread the allotted amount of food **over several meals a day**. It would be possible to give the cat a bowl of dry food in the morning that would last the whole day, but voracious animals could eat it all at once and then have nothing more to eat until the next day. Such a **long break from eating** not only makes the cat unhappy, but **can also lead to digestive problems**, especially if the stomach has previously been overloaded with too much food.

The great advantage of restrictive feeding with several meals is that the **food ration** can be **tailored precisely to a cat's individual needs**. Multiple feeding also strengthens the bond **between owner and pet**, which is particularly **helpful** when **dealing with shy cats**.

Combined feeding / mixed feeding

Combined feeding **usually includes both wet food and dry food**. This means that the cat is fed a mixed diet, although this does not necessarily have to be restrictive. For example, the cat is given a defined amount of wet food in the morning and/or evening and can help itself to a bowl filled with dry food throughout the day. Because of the wet food, the cat already **absorbs** more **liquid and may then drink less**. **Nevertheless, it is important that fresh water is always provided**. In order to avoid overfeeding, the quantities from the respective feeding recommendation must be reduced when mixed feeding.

Procedure for mixed feeding:

- Let's assume you want to feed wet food and dry food in equal proportions, then **pay attention to the feeding recommendations** for the two types of food and halve the value.
- Feed - spread over two meals - 50 per cent of the amount of wet food recommended on the packaging.
- **Also reduce** the daily dry food intake **by 50 per cent** of the feeding recommendation stated on the packaging. As dry food is much more concentrated than wet food, this amount is significantly lower by weight. You can therefore offer the dry food in one portion in an extra bowl, which your cat **can help** itself to **as it pleases**. However, do not top up the dry food unless you notice that your cat is losing weight.

Sample calculation:

Feeding recommendation for pure wet food	240 g per day
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Feeding recommendation for dry food only	60 g per day
In the combination	50 % wet food (= 120 g per day) 50 % dry food (=30 g per day)
Meal distribution	in the morning: 60 g wet food during the day for free intake: 30 g dry food in the evening: 60 g wet food

Please note the total **amount of wet food** and **dry food should not exceed the daily requirement for energy and nutrients**. Especially for cats that tend to be overweight.

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