

Quick Tips: Natural vs. Artificial Preservatives

Slight differences exist, but both natural and artificial preservatives are safe and effective ingredients in your cat's food.

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Which is better, natural or artificial fat preservatives? Actually, there's not much difference between the two. Artificial fat preservatives are safe, effective and have been used in cat foods for more than 30 years. In addition to acting as antioxidants, they may also have anticancer effects, and they help fight the toxic effects of mycotoxins.

Vitamin E and other tocopherols are the most common natural fat preservatives used in cat foods. Ascorbic acid, though effective as an antioxidant, is not often used as a fat preservative because it is not fat soluble. Ascorbyl palmitate, a chemical made by combining vitamin C with palmitic acid, is fat soluble. Vitamin E and ascorbic acid are less stable than artificial preservatives, so foods containing these substances may have a shorter shelf life than those containing artificial preservatives. Cat foods containing natural preservatives tend to be more expensive than those with artificial preservatives. However, cat foods with natural preservatives are more likely to be premium-type products, which may account for their higher cost.