

Healthy Treat Habits

Show your affection for your cat with a snack that won't ruin your pet's diet.

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Food is the universal language of love. You shower your sweetheart with home-cooked meals and delicious desserts to show your affection, and you may want to show the same type of love for your cat by giving him treats. Too many treats, however, can impact your pet's health, leading to weight gain and associated health problems.

How, then, do you share tasty morsels with your pet without harming his health? Choose a healthy snack, and limit the number of treats you dispense each day. Keep these tips in mind when selecting a snack for your feline friend.

1. If possible, choose a treat formulated to meet the guidelines published by the Association of American Feed Control Officials. Such treats will include a statement indicating this on the label. Not all treats include this statement on the label, but this does not mean the treats are not healthy. If in doubt, ask your veterinarian for advice.
2. Look for treats that include good-quality ingredients. Most cats like meat, chicken or fish-based morsels, and treats come in a range of flavors to meet your cat's preferences.
3. If your cat has a weight problem, choose low-calorie treats and limit how often you give your cat a treat. If the treats are large in size, consider breaking them into smaller pieces to further reduce the number of calories you give your pet.
4. Many cats love the taste and texture of canned food and consider it a welcome treat! If you feed your cat a dry food as his primary diet, consider giving him a treat of canned food from time to time.
5. Treat your cat to pieces of another dry food. Several pieces of a different flavor of kibble can be a welcome diversion to your pet's food routine. Feed just a few pieces of the new food to avoid stomach upset.