

Table Manners

Should you give your cat table scraps? Veterinarians share their advice.

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Most cat owners give their pets commercial kitty treats, but what about table scraps or other homemade snacks? Veterinarians are split on the subject.

"Just about any kind of protein source at home, such as chicken or turkey or dried liver, can be used as a treat in small quantities," says Dottie Laflamme, DVM, Ph.D. Sugary sweets, however, should be avoided--especially those containing chocolate, which is harmful to cats and dogs in high quantities.

"Homecooked foods best illustrate the potential problems associated with overdoing cat treats," says Richard Hill, VetMB, Ph.D., assistant professor of clinical nutrition at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in Gainesville. "Cats are special carnivores; they have unique requirements. And it's difficult, using homecooked diets, to get all of those things right. In my opinion, complete and balanced commercial foods are best."