

Too Many Treats

Treats have calories that add up. Give your cat an occasional treat, but don't overdo it.

Posted: Wed Dec 18 00:00:00 PST 2002

Feeding your cat too many treats can have a negative impact on its health.

"Manufacturers can make treats [nutritionally] complete and balanced, but they don't have to," says Rodney Noel, Ph.D., secretary of the American Association of Feed Control Officials. "Unlike commercial cat food, treats are not required to have a nutritional adequacy statement of their label. To most manufacturers, they're just the feline equivalent of potato chips just a snack, not a complete and healthful diet."

Moderation is the key according to most veterinarians, suggesting that snacks should be limited to 10 to 20 percent of a cat's total diet. Dottie Laflamme, DVM, Ph.D., recommends that treats be limited to 10 percent of a cat's daily caloric intake. "Most cats take in about 200 to 250 calories a day," Laflamme says, "so 10 percent of that would be just 25 calories from treats. That's not a lot. In addition, older cats and cats with chronic illnesses should have their snacking strictly regulated."