

My Cat Needs Several Meals a Day

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, gives suggestions on the best way to feed and water cats while you're gone.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: I am starting a new job and will be away all day. My cat needs to eat small meals served several time a day. What should I do?

A: One of my cat-sitting charges, George, a lovable and chubby orange tabby, was put on a diet and was only getting small portions of food three times a day. His family was going away for the summer and asked me to make a daily house call. However, that left the two other meals to manage. I suggested they buy a battery-operated feeder which can serve several portions. It has a programmable timer and only allows a single portion at a time.

I did a trial run with George, who took an instant liking to it. After one meal, he sat there staring at the feeder, willing it to open. I sure he eventually gave up, but when he returned later on, the portion door had miraculously opened up and there was another meal. Needless to say, George got on very well with feeder. I have noticed that some overweight cats need to eat small portions several times a day. These feeders can be very helpful if you are planning to be away on a regular basis.

I always say that cats need a fresh supply of drinking water at all times but please have plenty of water bowls available when you are away for any period of time. Many cats seem to prefer fresh running water to tap, but it is wasteful and not agreeable to let your cat jump up on a counter to drink from the faucet. I usually suggest trying an electric water fountain made especially for cats and found at many pet stores. Some include waterfalls which aerate the water with oxygen. They do not require a separate water line and use little electricity. Both battery-operated feeders and electric water fountains are a great way to ensure your kitty is getting her nutritional needs met while you away.

As always, I encourage readers to comment and share your stories and tips.