

## **FEEDING TIPS TO PREVENT OBESITY IN YOUR CAT**

Cats in the wild will typically eat 10 to 20 small meals throughout the day and night, with hours of foraging time each day. Simulating this feeding behaviour for domestic cats provides exercise, and prevents problems associated with lack of problem solving activity. Such stimulation also prevents obesity, a major problem associated with abnormal feeding behaviours.

### **How To: Simulate More Normal Eating Behaviours**

- Provide cats with puzzle feeders, interactive toys, and food balls that dispense food as the cat rolls it around.
- Make homemade puzzle feeders by cutting holes into a cardboard box or a 2 L plastic jug so that the cat has to paw the food out.
- Hide food around the house, in different places, and in or around objects for cats to “hunt”.
- Toss kibbles and let cats chase the food, as they would chase their prey.
- If unable to do multiple feedings each day, feed a minimum of twice daily, and try to hide the food in creative hiding places.

### **What food is best?**

- Contact your veterinarian for more information regarding the best food choices for your cat.
- The highest quality pet food is found in a veterinarian’s office, middle quality food at a pet food store, and the lowest quality food is found at a grocery store.

### **How much do I feed my cat?**

- Please note that the recommended food quantities on pet food labels are based on the amount needed by active cats living in with multiple cats.
- The amount of food needed for a cat living in a single cat household and is neutered/spayed is much lower.

### **Killing your cat with kindness, TREATS**

- If you choose to use treats to reward behaviour or to train your cat, be sure that the caloric content is part of the total measured daily ration.
- It is best to use part of the regular diet for treats.
- If you use a treat, other than the regular diet be sure to limit the amount to less than 10% of the daily diet.
- Remember to include all members of the family so that duplication of rewards does not occur.

### **How To: Stop My Cat from Begging**

- If your cat begs, feed the largest portion of the day when you are present.
- If your cat wakes you in the night to beg for food, feed the largest meal prior to bedtime.

### **My Cat Stopped Eating. Is This An Emergency?**

- Seek veterinary attention if your cat has not eaten in 24 or more hours.
- Cats that go without food can develop serious disease.

(The above information is from the American Association of Feline Practitioners)