

# Equine & Canine

Chiropractic + Massage



I hope you all got through this long and hard winter without suffering too much at the hands of the weather. As I write this the fields are drying out and the days are definitely longer!

## What about cats?



As the name of my business suggests I treat horses and dogs but actually anything with a spine can be treated with chiropractic. I know a lot of you have cats so I'm going to use this newsletter to highlight some issues in relation to feline ownership (or rather to being the guardian chosen by your cat!)

For those of you that have come to see me for yourself you know that nutrition is a very important part of health. The same is true for our animals but cats in particular have very special requirements. They are true carnivores, designed by nature to eat only meat (raw meat) unlike dogs, which are omnivores and can digest a wide variety of foodstuffs.

The cat has a very specialised digestive system, needing more specific amino acids (found in protein) in their diet and lack enzymes needed in carbohydrate (starch) digestion. For those of you who would like to read more about this I can point you to the reference I used: "Timely Topics in Nutrition" article in the December 1st 2002 Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) titled "The Carnivore Connection to Nutrition in Cats".

## All about meat

So a cat's diet should consist of meat. Unfortunately a lot of cat food, particularly dry cat food contains a high percentage of cereals and grains (all carbohydrates). This makes it

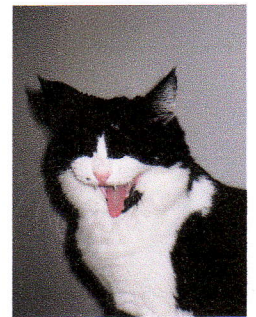
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cheaper and easier to manufacture. But does it meet the needs of the cat?

## Obesity, diabetes and kidney problems...

Other factors, such as exercise, genetics, indoor/ outdoor cat certainly play a role but nutrition is a key component in the increase of illnesses found in cats. Cats don't increase their water intake in relation to the dry matter content of their diet but rather to the moisture content. This means that cats on dry food will take in less water in total than those on wet food placing more strain on the kidneys. Obesity and diabetes are closely linked and studies have shown that high protein diets are both good for weight management and diabetes control in cats.

So does it not make sense to prevent these problems in the first place by not feeding a diet high in carbohydrates?!?



So I urge you to start reading labels on cat food and choosing food with a high meat percentage and not one that boasts the variety of grains and cereals in it, no matter how "natural" they are.

A word of warning if you feed your cat "human" food. Any meat that has been cooked does not have all the amino acids preserved that are essential to a cat, so meat needs to be raw and supplemented.

### Quote of the month

A cat has absolute emotional honesty: human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not. - Ernest Hemingway

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