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# Do You Have A Picky Eater?

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well if one has not dined well.”

~ Virginia Woolf

## Ruby Recommends:

- Feed 2 - 3 small meals per day
- Allow 30 minutes for the meal to be consumed then put away the uneaten portion.
- If you have multiple pets, set up individual feeding areas. Use separate rooms if necessary.
- Feed a variety of foods so your pet cannot get “stuck” on just one or two favourites.
- Add some nutritious canned or dehydrated foods.

Just like us, every pet has individual preferences for flavours, aromas and textures. This can sometimes present challenges when striving to introduce variety into your pet’s diet. Don’t assume that simply because your pet enjoys something that it’s healthy—often the opposite is true. Allowing a pet to dictate their diet based on their preferences is akin to allowing a 3 year old child to choose their favorite diet of French fries, ice cream and candy.

Proactively, it is important to *not* allow your pet to become ‘addicted’ to eating only one food—never feed *just* their favourites! If your pet is refusing to eat, there are a variety of approaches you can try to encourage them.

- Hunger can be a powerful motivator. It’s okay to let a healthy dog miss a few meals to develop an appetite. However, cats should not go without food for more than 24 hours, especially if they have health concerns or are overweight.
- Mix in your pet’s favourite food with the new food.
- Serve the food warmed—adding warm water or broth enhances the smell and is especially enticing to cats.
- Use small amounts of yogurt, cottage cheese, salmon or tuna juice, or parmesan to increase palatability. We have many healthy options designed to increase palatability. Ask us for suggestions.
- Most important: don’t free-feed and be persistent!

## Free-feeding

Free-feeding is the best way to create a picky eater. Smelling food all day makes the food less appealing and knowing it will always be there does not motivate the appetite.

By feeding meals, your pet will have the opportunity to become hungry and, therefore, more interested in the meal. Leave the food out for a maximum of 30 minutes and then put the uneaten portion away.

Although some pets seem to be able to snack on kibbles all day without over-consuming, having constant access to food is not healthy for a carnivore. Herbivores, such as cows, eat all day. Your dog or cat is not a cow! Carnivores need to rest their digestive systems between meals. It takes considerable energy to digest meat so allowing the stomach to empty gives your pet’s body the chance to use those resources on other metabolic functions.



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