

# Feeding Tips to PREVENT OBESITY in Your Cat

From the American Association of Feline Practitioners

Cats in the wild typically eat 10 to 20 small meals throughout the day and night, with hours of foraging time each day. Simulating this feeding behavior 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 behaviors.

## **SIMULATE MORE NORMAL EATING BEHAVIOR:**

- 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 2-liter plastic jug so that the cat paws 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 after the food, as they would chase 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.

*Seek your veterinarian’s advice on the type and amount of food to feed your cat.*

*Recommended food quantities on pet food containers are based on the amount needed by active cats living with multiple cats. The amount needed by sedentary, neutered cats is much lower.*

If treats are used to train or reward behavior, make sure that the caloric content is part of the total measured daily ration. It’s best to use a portion of the regular diet for treats; if extra tidbits are used, limit the amount to less than 10% of the total diet. Involve all members of the family so that duplication of rewards does not occur.

If your pet begs, feed the largest meal when you will be present to prevent begging. If your cat wakes you at night to be fed, feed the largest meal prior to bedtime.

*Seek veterinary attention if your cat has not eaten in 24 or more hours.*