

# Tips on Changing Your Cat's Food

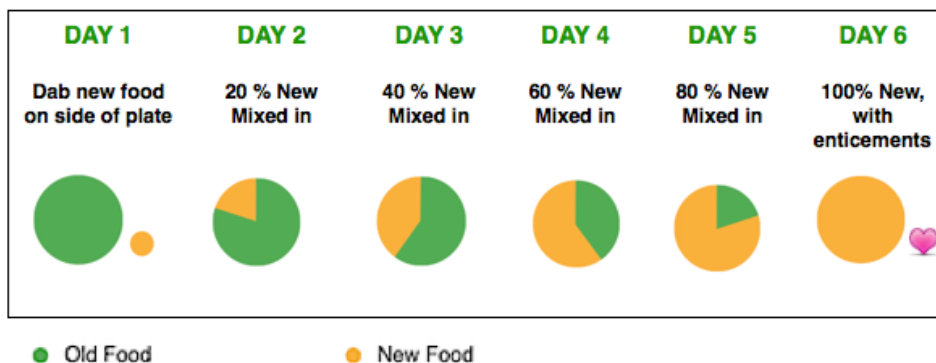
Cats are creatures of habit and can therefore be naturally suspicious of any change in their food, feeding routine or the ambience of their feeding environment. Their ability to taste and accept food is intimately connected to their strong sense of smell. It's no surprise then that the process of "approving" new/unfamiliar food will initially involve your cat smelling it. If it smells "right" then they may actually try it. It then has to also "pass" your cats expectations and preferences for taste, temperature and texture so **the key to any change in a cat's food is to introduce it gradually over 7 days.**

## You might like to try some of the following suggestions to ease the transition between foods:

- Have your cat eat their usual food while inadvertently smelling the new food. They are more likely to then associate the new food with positive feelings and eventually accept it as normal. Put a little of the new food on the side of their plate for a day or two.
- Increase the proportion of the new food each day, at the same time decreasing the proportion of the previous food until at the end of a week you are feeding the full amount of the new food.
- Avoid feeding chilled foods - to increase acceptance, when you are using wet food, warm it to body temperature, but no hotter. Most cats will prefer wet food slightly warm as it can improve the aroma, taste and texture.
- If necessary, change the texture of the wet food by adding a small amount of warm water to soften it and make it easier to mix the old and new food types together

You may need more or fewer days, depending on your cat's sensitivity, digestion, and how radically different the new food is. If your cat becomes off colour or you see any vomiting or diarrhoea, then go back to the old food and contact your vet if no improvement is seen within 24 hours. **Gradually mix** the new food in with the old food, following the guide below. **Start with just a dab** (that they probably won't eat) on the side of their usual food. This gets them used to the smell while enjoying their usual meal.

If your cat has been eating dry and you are introducing wet food, try mixing the wet food with another wet food they *will* eat. You may need to entice your cat by using what I call "tasty toppers" (eg shredded chicken, tuna, cooked white fish, a few treats, broths etc). If you are trying to switch from dry food to wet food, mix the new wet food with the dry food gradually.



Remember, if all else fails, don't give up. Ask whether there are any alternative flavours or brands to try.

**IMPORTANT!!!** Never let your cat go more than 36 hours without eating. Always keep some of their old food back just in case. Many cat lovers do not realize that if a cat goes on a "hunger strike" because they don't like the new food, they could very quickly develop hepatic lipidosis (HL) —especially overweight cats! This can be fatal if not treated soon enough, so never assume your cat will eventually eat it if you starve them.