



# Newsletter

February 2017

## Dieting Cats Don't Hold a Grudge

Cornell University veterinarians studied whether overweight cats placed on a diet for 8 weeks would show behavior changes. They found that they do, but not the grudge that owners might fear. The majority of cats lost weight and they tended to be more cuddly. This finding should be reassuring to owners who tend to use food to show love. After an 8 week diet, the cats actually demonstrated more affection after they were fed, their owners reported.

"Maybe owners will now be more likely to do what's healthy for their cats," said veterinarian Bonnie Beaver, executive director of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists.

In recent years, the epidemic of overweight and obese cats has alarmed veterinarians. Many factors contribute to weight gain in house cats. Among them is the complexity of the human-animal bond, namely how humans demonstrate love with food, and how cats learn "affectionate behavior" in order to get fed.

"A cat learns to manipulate us very well: when she's hungry, she's the most affectionate cat in the world. And people will do anything to keep their cats happy," said Dr. Richard E. Goldstein, chief medical officer at the Animal Medical Center in New York.

Many owners free-feed cats, letting them graze at will. But bored indoor cats, like bored indoor humans, may eat beyond satiety.

Concerned with the human role in feline obesity, Cornell researchers asked: If a cat's food were reduced, would its behavior change? For the study, 48 cats, each at least 25% over ideal weight, were put on one of three restricted diets, equal in calories. Owners answered extensive questionnaires about their cats before and after the diet.

Good news, cat owners! More than three-quarters of the cats lost weight and despite the restricted feeding, owners felt the cats did not turn vindictive. Instead, owners believed the cats showed more affection. After feeding, the cats would more often purr and sit in the owner's lap.

Dr. Emily D. Levine, the study's lead author, said that one reason cats gain too much weight is that owners "misread" their pet's behavior, unwittingly reinforcing it with treats. When cats rub up against their owners throughout the day, owners like that behavior and reward it with a food treat. People feel good feeding their cats and don't know other ways to give them affection.

And sometimes, if cats are expecting to be fed and the owner isn't obeying, the cat may show aggression by swatting. So you feed them to stop the behavior but you inadvertently have then reinforced the swatting. There's a learned component. It works.

"A lot of cats are bored and that's the bigger picture," Dr. Levine said. "If the only thing they have to do all day is eat, they will ask for more and more." Rather than overfeed cats to please them, she said, owners could engage their natural curiosity with interactive play, even training them (really) to go to their place and wait for food.

-New York Times

## Feed The Need. Lose the Bowl

For cats, hunting is part of what brain scientists call "The Seeking Circuit." In the seeking circuit, the brain releases dopamine, which heightens their arousal and creates a great feeling of anticipation... like a child on Christmas morning. The small meal completes the cycle and leaves your cat feeling satisfied and complete... the presents are open. Cats need to engage in the seeking circuit many times a day to be mentally and physically healthy.

Eating from a bowl denies them this natural cycle entirely, yet the need to hunt remains instinctual.

Toys engage cats in the seeking circuit, putting them in a heightened state of arousal. However, the circuit is not completed by the food reward. This leaves them in the heightened state of arousal without the satisfaction of completion. In nature, cats hunt and engage this seeking circuit between 9-20 times a day, 24 hours a day. Cats spend an average of 6 hours a day seeking their food, which provides them with the majority of their daily exercise. This goes on day and night. Now you know why your cat might wake you up to eat in the middle of the night! When we remove the opportunity to hunt, we deny their natural instincts and disrupt their natural rhythms. This can lead to physical, behavioral and mental problems.

The NoBowl Feeding System mimics the natural cycle of the hunt by engaging the natural seeking circuit and completing it with the satisfaction of a food reward. In addition, the NoBowl Skin provides the tactile sensation cats want, so that they can engage their teeth, claws and paws in the hunt.

Once transitioned onto the system, your cat will hunt, find their meal, and then play with it to get the food reward. Satisfied with this healthy portion, your cat will groom and rest until hunger motivates the next hunt... just like in nature.

For more information and to order:

<https://nobowlcat.com/>

"Veterinary behaviorists know that feeding has a dual purpose for cats. It is not only a way to satisfy their energy need, but it also represents the main opportunity to satisfy their primary behavioral need to act as predators. Not having the possibility to satisfy this need may be physically and psychologically detrimental to a cat. Dr. Liz Bales (a Penn Vet grad!) has finally heard our cats' voice and has created a feeding-system that, for the first time, considers their point of view on what a good meal is!" —Dr. Carlo Siracusa,



## Important Announcements

### Please Help Us Fight A Critical Feline Disease!

Your cat may be eligible to participate in a study to evaluate an investigational oral liquid medication that may delay the progression or worsening of CKD (Chronic Kidney Disease), so that cats with CKD might live longer and healthier lives.

CKD is the most common disease affecting cats over seven years of age and is a major cause of suffering and death in senior cats (up to 50% of elderly cats are affected).



#### Why participate?

- The findings from this research may lead to better treatment, health, and quality of life for cats with CKD
- Your cat's kidney health will be monitored closely
- Your cat will receive comprehensive medical evaluations and diagnostic testing
- There is no cost for your cat's participation

If you're interested to see if your cat qualifies for this study, please call and ask to speak with Karla.

### February is Pet Dental Health Month

15% off all dental cleanings

**plus**

FREE comb out, bandana and dental food.

Book soon—spaces are limited.

### Coming Soon—Our New Updated Website!

Our website is getting a make-over! We will be adding things to make your life with cats easier like on-line appointment scheduling and prescription refills. Meow!

We are also adding a new section for testimonials. Can we post yours? Please send your testimonial to [info@felinespecialties.com](mailto:info@felinespecialties.com). Pictures are welcome!

## Hospital Hours

Monday - Friday 7:00am - 6:00pm

Saturday 9:00am- noon

Sunday 9:00am—9:30am for drop offs and pick ups

**9702 Riverside Dr.**

## Contact Information

Phone (918) 299-8222

[www.felinespecialties.com](http://www.felinespecialties.com)

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E-mail for Dr. Zinn: [jzinn@felinespecialties.com](mailto:jzinn@felinespecialties.com)

E-mail for Dr. O’Cain: [jocain@felinespecialties.com](mailto:jocain@felinespecialties.com)

## Emergency Information

For after hours emergency contact:

**Oklahoma Veterinary Specialists (OVS)**

(918) 299-4900

1501 West 78th St South (west of Tulsa Hills and north of Main Event)

**Animal Emergency Clinic (AEC)**

(918) 665-0508

4055 S 102nd E AVE (west of highway 169 at the 41st Street exit)

