

In the beginning of my long vegetarian/vegan journey I decided that one of the reasons I'd let my cat continue to be carnivorous was because of the obvious; their teeth. Sharp, pointy, and meant for what they were meant for; eating meat.

But now there are two problems. I am poor, and have been really tight on money for months since being unemployed. For this reason I've pushed aside ethics and bought my baby (kitty) the cheapest of the cheap cat food. But you know and I know that this kind of cat food is C.R.A.P. We all know where it comes from.

If I wasn't trying to be so frugal I would instead by her the expensive cat food at natural food markets that don't have any additives etc.

As time has been going on my perspective on the correct diet treatment for my daughter (as I sometimes consider my cat)has been changing. I'd rather feed her something totally foreign and evolutionarily unlogical, then feed her the crap they sell in those cat cans.

I would love to find a way to creat CHEAP vegan cat food. If your cat is also on such a diet, what was your reasoning, how'd your cat take it, how long did it take for the cat to transition etc. If you have a personal recipe for vegan cat food...share!

(Post a new comment)



Leftenderic 2004-01-03 13:42 (link)

As much as some of my cats like to munch on the occasional leaf, they are not herbavores. I highly advise against making your cat become vegan most likely against its will and without its consent.

(Reply to this)



Lalien_sunset 2004-01-03 13:43 (link)

DO NOT, I repeat DO NOT FEED YOUR CAT A VEGAN DIET.

There are certain minerals and proteins that cats NEED in meat, if they do not get them they will go BLIND and also develop many other horrible ailments.

There are certain supplements you can get to put into vegan cat food, but they are WAY more expensive than normal (good quality) meat based cat food, so it's really not worth it if your reasons are monetary.

Cats truly ARE carnivores.

(Reply to this)



<u>kysmetkitty</u> 2004-01-03 13:44 (link)

Cats shouldn't be fed a vegan/vegetarian diet because they are natural carnivores. They **need** certain things that meat supplies them with so if you fed them a vegan diet, it wouldn't be cheap because you would absolutely have to give them supplements.

Dogs live as veg*ns, cats cannot.

(Reply to this)



keepinitcool 2004-01-03 14:08 (link)

As someone mentioned to me, cats need taurine which apparently is from meat only. People can make their own, but cats have limited ability for that.

http://www.ivillage.com/pets/expert/vet/articles/0,,287564_271824,00.html

(Reply to this)



ahhh please don't turn your cat vegan! as others have posted before me, cats seriously need to eat meat, and can get very ill when denied this. please consult a vet, or even do some internet research on it, to hear the specific ways this can hurt poor kitty (just make sure to check the sources-- someone posted a vegan cat food site a while back, with completely wrong info. they were just trying to get people to buy their product and weren't interested in actual fact or science).

perhaps your vet would have options on how to cook your cat's meals yourself; i'm not sure how much that would save on money, though. and then you'd have to deal with cooking meat or fish. i know from personal experience, though, that those cheapie grocery store cat food cans can still do damage to kitty-- a lot of them are high in fats and salts, stuff i really had to wean my cat off of, once she started having serious health problems.

(Reply to this)



smileswhf
2004-01-03 14:22 (link)

When my vet found out I was vegetarian, he told me in no uncertain terms that my cats were never to be put on a vegetarian diet, even though I had no intention of doing so and didn't ask. It's really dangerous for them. If your cat is young, it is perfectly acceptable to put her on an all dry food diet. That should be more economical for you than buying wet food. As cats get old, the wet food is often easier on their systems but you shouldn't need to worry about this until kitty is about 10. If kitty is stubborn about the switch, you can also mix dry food in with wet to stretch it out. Your user info says you are in seattle. Bummer. I have quite a bit of

cat food that my cats won't eat that I would be willing to donate to the cause. If you plan on getting down to the Los Angeles area in the near future, it's yours if you want it.

(Reply to this)



Langle frightened 2004-01-03 15:11 (link)

Maybe it's just me but, even being vegetarian and loving my cats dearly, I don't worry about animal cruelty or meat products much for a carnivore that's as a cruel to its prey as cats are. It's not moral or immoral: it's the way they are.

(Reply to this)



You *need* to feed your cat meat, even if it is against your beliefs. If you feel that strongly about it I really don't recommend keeping carnivorous animals as pets. A vegan, or indeed vegetarian diet is no good for your cats health at all.

(Reply to this)



<u>Lintellijente</u> 2004-01-03 18:43 (<u>link</u>)

My cats do like to eat grass, so we bought some seed and a pot for it at Petco. They eat it faster than it can grow back.

(Reply to this)



Cats are carnivores. They will not survive a healthy life w/out meat. I no longer have any cats but when I did I would buy the best cat food I could afford and add sprouts into the food w/a touch of good oil for those hair balls. They loved it. And never had hair ball problems. I would also give my cats the avocado shells to lick and also cantalope shells. They really loved it. So we both ate well!

(Reply to this)



Lio_ee 2004-01-04 08:44 (link)

Hi there, I'm just going to echo the others and say that as a vet student, I have been taught that cats cannot be fed a vegetarian/vegan diet. It's been scientifically proven that they need certain amino acids that only exist in meat. They cannot produce these amino acids on their own. Cat biscuits should provide all the minerals and a.acids they need, and shouldn't be that expensive. My kitten is currently on Whiskas Kitty Biscuits at A\$1.94 a box. Hope this helps!

(Reply to this)



<u>ladycorbeau</u> 2004-01-04 11:00 (<u>link</u>)

My cats are on a mostly dry food diet. It is cheaper than wet food and much better for their teeth. One of my cats gets a rash if he eats certain types of plants, so my cats eat a dry food that has a meat base.

(Reply to this)



I understand wanting to make your cat vegan.... but from what I hear, and what everyone else has already said, it's not good for poor kitty....

Perhaps it would be easier for you to let your cat feed herself? Her prey would have a chance at free life, and die a "natural" death, and hopefully your kitty would be avoiding chemicals that way too. My grandparents fed their cats a small bowl of dry food each night and let them find the rest themselves. The cats were happy and healthy. Of course, if you live in the middle of the city, this would hardly be a possibility.

:c)

(Reply to this)



Our cats are vegan *and healthy*. They have great coats and grea0t teeth, etc. the vet made comments about how healthy and shiny their coats were. (the older one *did* occasionally catch a rat or bug though, being

indoor/outdoor when we lived in the country for awhile.) However, my aunts cats were vegetarian and never ate any rats and lived to be 20 years old. We give our cats nutritional yeast and complete protein, and feed them evolution feline from <u>http://www.vegancats.com</u> I susepect that it's as hard for some people to believe that cats can live w/o meat protein as it is for some people to accept that humans can. I don't think giving them rotted meat protein could be any "healthier" or more evolutionary natural anyway. Someone want "evolutionary natural"? Then set them free in the wild, and don't keep them as pets. It's just as against their will to give them manufactured rotten meat and i have no desire to buy meat. Since all the vegan cats I know are healthy and all the ones that died, died at some age around 17-22 of natural causes, I don't think there's anything wrong with a vegan diet for cats.

(Reply to this) (Thread)



Lthanny 2004-01-04 18:48 (link)

that's really lucky of you guys to have such healthy cats, but i've seen articles and other vets who have found through research and experience that most cats (of course there are exceptions to every rule) do not do well on such diets. they really haven't any reason to lie or mislead the subject, since most also profess that dogs can live a veggie lifestyle.

personally, i love animals too much to risk pushing my beliefs or dislikes on them, especially with any risk to their health. i agree that the 'just let them be natural' argument doesn't stand, since yeah, the most natural way for them to live would be in the wild fending for themselves. as their guardians ('owners' just never sat right with me), it's our duty to make sure no harm comes to them, purposefully or not.

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



fiametta
2004-01-06 11:46 (link)

I've seen articles of both kinds. My aunts cats being healthy is what made me realize that it could be done. "Pushing beliefs on pets" is not really that relevant in this issue either since forcing rotten meat in cans on cats could also be looked at that way. Pretty much you are "pushing your beliefs" on cats keeping them as pets anyway, much like you push your beliefs on kids whether you feed them a meat diet or a veg diet growing up. Cats do produce taurine in small amounts in their digestive tracts, as that article says. It's just a matter of who is funding the research what it says, research funded by companies that produce meat based cat food, will have results that help them economically, just like research with vegan cat food will have it's specific results. I prefer to believe what I see.

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



i agree that the basic 'don't push your beliefs on your cats' debate is kinda flawed, because i'm sure my cat would probably love to run wild and kill birds left and right, but i know that's wrong and dangerous, so i keep her from doing that. but i do think that pushing beliefs on an animal when it hurts them is wrong. i also agree that one should check their sources of information, but when the overwhelming research supports one line of thought and isn't just from cat food websites but from independent vets and such, i prefer to go with that. my cat's health is too important to risk anything less.

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



<u>Moon_razor</u> 2004-01-07 17:09 (link)

The research found in scholarly journals (where one finds scientifically recognized research) on the nutrition of cat s focuses primarily on dietary defenciencies, such as taurine (1). Vegan cat foods contain the necessary nutrients (standards set by the scientific community). However even current recommendations are not always up to date (2). Pet food standards are set by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), a FDA organization, based on outside research. Outside of scientific feline nutrition studies, the majority of research on cat food is done by the pet food industry (www.petfoodinstitute.org). The pet food industry is also a powerful political lobbying group (http://www.appma.org/).

The FDA, in their statement about vegetarian diets for cats, provide no evidence that a vegan diet is harmful, but recommends caution for consumers due to the unavailability of research. A critically thinking reader would no doubt appreciate the usage of the terms "may not work". The FDA advises if one choses to provide a vegan diet for a cat they should use commercially prepared food that meet the guidlines provided by the AAFCO

(http://www.fda.gov/cvm/index/fdavet/19

99/may.html#vegetarian). Of course, if I took 100% stock in the FDA food recomendations, I would be eating my 2-3 servings of meat and 2-3 servings of dairy products a day. It may be noted that while most pets aren't susceptible to BSE (aka Mad Cow disease), cats can get it. According to the FDA, "Approximately 90 cats in the UK and several cats in other European countries have been diagnosed with the feline version of BSE. Before it was recognized that they were susceptible to the BSE agent, cats were exposed to the infectious agent through commercial cat food and through meat scraps provided by butchers."(3) Is feeding them slaughtered cows really the best thing for ones cats? Is it truly low risk?

You mentioned an *overwhelming* body of research that supports the view that a properly balanced (contained the nutrients cats need) vegan diet is harmful. Please cite your sources so that those in question can make an informed decision.

(1) Taurine: An essential nutrient for the cat. A brief review of the biochemistry of its requirement and the clinical consequences of deficiency, *Nutrition Research*, Volume 15, Issue 1, January 1995

[2]

Growing kittens require less dietary calcium than current allowances. *The Journal of Nutrition* v. 129 no9 (Sept. 1999)

Chloride requirement of kittens for growth is less than current recommendations. *The Journal of Nutrition* v. 129 no10 (Oct. 1999)

(3) http://www.fda.gov/cvm/index/animalfeed/petfoods.htm

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



actually, i mentioned vets who have said a vegan cat diet is not healthy; they are the ones who have the experience in this field. they see cats all day, see their problems and causes. i only have one cat, and i choose to trust their views on the subject, since i am nowhere near an expert on the subject. but if you are interested, here are a few articles written by vets who have the time and experience to research this thoroughly:

"In general, high-quality animal source proteins provide superior amino acid balances for companion animals, compared with the amino acid balances that are supplied by grain proteins. The protein in grains is not as balanced or available as the protein in high-quality animal sources." quoted from Case, Carey and Hirakawa in "Canine and Feline Nutrition".

"The reason for this is that cats (domestic and wild) do not have the chemical systems in their body to efficiently utilise or synthesise some nutrients, so they must be present in the food that they eat. Domestic cats have the following special nutritional needs compared to dogs : A high protein content in the ration The amino acid arginine The amino acid taurine The essential fatty acid arachidonic acid The vitamin niacin Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) Vitamin A These nutritional needs are typical of those expected for obligate carnivores. Vitamin A is only present in food of animal origin, and the inability to convert linolenic acid into arachidonic acid is a metabolic characteristic shared with other carnivores including the lion, turbot (a

carnivoreus fish) and the mosquito! Cats therefore are obligate carnivores and MUST NOT BE FED AN EXCLUSIVELY VEGETARIAN RATION." http://www.provet.co.uk/petfacts/health

tips/vegetarianism.htm

and even more troubling: "However, some vegetarian cats are also reported to have a higher incidence of urinary tract problems (crystals, inflammation, etc.)- this is due to the fact that most vegetable protein is less acidic than meat protein" from <u>http://www.vegancats.com/faq.html</u>, which of course and quite handily, sells products to combat this 'little problem'.

speaking as someone who has a cat with health problems, there is no way i'm putting her at risk for more pain. i commend you on your dedication to this issue, but the websites you listed were not research related, but ones either run by pet food companies or personal sites with nothing to back it up. if you have good luck raising your cat this way, i'm happy for you and your pet. but i cannot agree that a few personal testimonials should be taken as fact over people actually trained and researched in this field.

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



Thank you for replying <u>moon_razor</u> 2004-01-08 11:43 (link)

You may have noticed that I cited reputable research journals containing papers from scientists in the field (Journal of Nutrition and Nutrition Research). It is through the research of nutritional and vetrinary scientists that the textbooks from which veterinarians are taught from arise. While I cannot know the personal experiences of the vet you go to, most vets have never dealt with vegan cats. However there are instances in which someone feeds a nutrient deficiant plant-based diet to a cat at which they will develop health problems such a retinal degeneracy, and every vet will attest to knowing of such stories. The diet which was fed to the cat was one lacking the proper nutrients (the ones listed in your comment), most likely taurine.

But I cannot find any evidence and *you haven't provided any evidence* that cats fed a vegan diet for a cat which addresses their nutritional needs is unhealthy.

Before I made my decision to feed my cat a vegan diet, I extensively researched the subject because I wanted to know if I was making the correct decision. I would love to see more research in this area in the future. A healthy vegan cat is not a fluke though, having two cat who are vegan from different genetic pools, at different stages in their lives. Often vets will comment on how healthy our oldest cat is, which didn't happen before he was a vegan cat. I know I have made the correct decision for my cats. Just as veganism, it is ultimately just a choice of what one wants to feed the animals they love. Vegetarians and vegans should ask themselves why they became vegetarian in the first place. If you are going to give you cat meat-based food, I implore you to consider using only cat food containing fish, and discontinue using food with poultry and mammals (due to the large amount of cruelty involved in those two industries and the fact that fish do not have a neocortex).

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



Re: Thank you for replying <u>thanny</u> 2004-01-08 18:10 (link)

i'm not sure i understand... you do or don't trust the fda? because that is the only reputable link you gave me. even in that linked article, they profess that '...it is theoretically possible to formulate a diet that meets all these specific needs using synthetic additives. However, it becomes more expensive and far less reliable to do it this way.' 'far less reliable' does nothing more than raise red flags for me, anything but reassure me on its validity.

i don't trust the vegancats link anymore than i trust any links by purina-- they're both offering products that cater to their agenda. the above links i posted are the evidence requested against feeding a cat a vegan diet. i do not believe in pumping my cat full of more medicine just to get a better nutritional balance and to combat against vegan diet-related problems, as the vegancats site suggests.

i'm glad you are happy with your decision, but i still cannot agree that having two cats who fare well on such a diet means all cats can or should go on it.

actually, my cat is already on a vet-prescribed, highly-monitored diet to combat health problems, but thanks for your suggestion. i know she'd love nothing more than to have a big mouthful of tuna fish right now, though...;0)

(Reply to this) (Parent)



<u>L</u>fiametta 2004-01-06 12:10 (<u>link</u>)

BTW If I *ever* noticed something unhealthy in my cats and suspected it was a nutritional deficiency, or if the vet had concerns, etc, I would rush out to buy tuna or taurine paste, ASAP. I actually had my doubts when I started making my first cat vegan awhile back and still have some "just in case" taurine paste, though it's probably outdated now, but since they are incredibly healthy and our vet doesn't have concerns, I don't use it.

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



Link)

The food that our cats get *does* have taurine in it, it has synthetic taurine. I was skeptical once before because studies I have read don't have reports of how well absorbed synthetic taurine is for cats. However it seems that most commercial cat foods use synthetic taurine as an additive because the processing of the meat kills alot of the natural taurine. (I think I'll go search the cupboards and throw that old outdated likely rancid tube out now, if I haven't already.) I also have learned that amino acids are easily synthesized in labs, and have been for some time, haveing taken some more biology.

I think it's only natural that a vegan would be curious about and do *real* in-depth research (like scientific articles, not just internet BS) to find out about a viable vegan alternative for pets that are already subjected to your preferences in being kept as 'pets.' I encourage everyone here to do some research *in the library* (BIOInfo is a good database, and EBSCOhost is OK) as I am *in the process* of doing now ---thanks to this post. :)

Fortunately for me, I have known *a great many* vegan cats who are healthy and thus *saw* it was possible.... However, I'd like to be able to more accurately tell people why a vegan diet is possible for domesticated pets. As I said before alot of the arguments for why a vegetarian diet is unsuitable for cats remind me alot of the reasons it is unsuitable for humans, i.e. lack of B12, lack of taurine. So far, it looks like our cats needs are met and more than likely exceeded. I feel blessed to have them in my life. :)

(Reply to this) (Parent)



really, it's not immoral if they catch the meat themselves, is it? its not in my opinion at least :)

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



2004-01-06 11:50 (link)

Oh absolutely not! That's their prerogative. they probably still eat alot of spiders and stuff anyway. They keep the mice away. *G*

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



2004-01-06 23:10 (link)

well in that case they dont need to be vegan cats, you can just let them catch their own and remain a vegan owner by making syre they stay nourished by boying them vegan cat food and letting them fulfil the carnivore side of their diet themselves. i mean, if cats in the wild can catch their own food then your cats can too, you jsut have to make sure you have an alternative available for whever they dont, even if that is the common occurance...:) man i dont know if that made any sense to you at all....: :/ lol

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



fiametta 2004-01-07 14:44 (link)

No what you wrote makes sense. However, my cats don't really catch their own food now, but they don't need to because they get synthetic taurine in their vegan food. However, I'm not going to stop them from hunting a spider because that's their nature. My problem is with buying tumor filled meat by-products made of the mistreated chickens and cows that are too "flawed" for 'people food,' not with the cats nature, I see veganism as a counterbalance for how out of balance the world has become with factory farming and needless death. I will always avoid animal products because i have found it really isn't necessary for me to kill other animals. It's a choice i am happy with. :)

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



yeah - thats exactly it. :)

(Reply to this) (Parent)



about meece <u>fiametta</u> 2004-01-06 12:14 (<u>link</u>)

hmm..but I doubt city mice are that healthy for cats though. (Fortunately the mice bother the catless neighbors and not us. LOL.)

But they still hunt even now, in the city...Just yesterday the little one caught and ate a big spider after playing with it for 3 hours, though. Cats will be cats, and that doesn't bother me. Spiders eat flies and cats eat bugs and 'vermin.'

(Reply to this) (Parent) (Thread)



Re: about meece fiametta 2004-01-06 18:16 (link)

hehe..i said vermin. oops....*G*

(Reply to this) (Parent)



<u>Circebe</u> 2004-01-05 12:19 (<u>link</u>)

What is virology? (<u>Reply to this</u>) (<u>Parent</u>) (<u>Thread</u>)



Virology is the study of viruses, as you probably guessed. *G*

It is usually categorized as a division of Microbiology, but

sometimes is in conjunction with medical school programs because alot of the current research has to do with pathology, i.e. human disease.

I am interested in how viruses can be used to target cancer, (especially transcriptionally.) Also interested in whether cancer can trigger disease like cancer (through RNA swapping) or lupus (through interaction w/ immune system)...(very controversial theories.)

You can find out alot by doing a google search on "virology." (though one must be careful b/c it often seems that internet research yields a lot of rubbish on a great many subjects ;)You can find out even more by requesting more information from colleges of virology. On many university websites there will be information about faculty members current research. (Of course probably only weirdos like me care about reading that stuff. LOL)

Discover, and *Scientific American* popular magazines are also good sources of easy to digest information, they frequesntly feature articles on virology, what with biotechnology being all the rage now. (I hope to find a program with ethical practices or at least open to making ethical practices)I sometimes utilize the easy to read *popular* magazines in order to better understand the technical content of the scientific journals when I look up stuff on BIOInfo.

Well that's probably more than you *ever cared to know* about virology ---so I will stop now. LOL! Anyway...Hope that was informative. :)

(Reply to this) (Parent)



Cats can be vegan <u>moon_razor</u> 2004-01-06 16:54 (link)

The above objections are somewhat similar to those of critics of vegan diets for humans. As more in depth research will show, cats cannot only be healthy on a vegan diet, but are often healthier than their non-vegan counterparts. As far as taurine goes, cats do need taurine. However, taurine was one of the first enzymes to be synthesized in the laboratory, and most commercial sources of taurine are non-animal derived. In fact, most commercial cat foods contain synthesized taurine(1). A properly balanced vegan diet (containing taurine, vitamin A, and arachidonic acid) is healthy for cats(2). As far as nature of cats is concerned, one must remember that domesticating an animal alters its nature. Finally veganism is NOT a diet, it is a choice and a lifestyle. It is a choice in which to live a life free from dependance and usage of animal products. To claim to be vegan but feed the animals one cares for meat(by-products) is nothing short of hypocritical.

(1) "What's really in pet food", Animal Protection Institute http://www.api4animals.org/79.htm

(2) Evidence of healthy vegan cats and dogs

http://www.vegancats.com/gallery1.php

http://www.vegechat.org/galerie.html

http://home.att.net/%7Estarfurry/vegancats.html

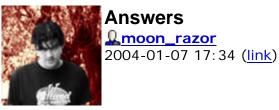
(Reply to this)



Lcailin_t 2004-01-07 08:57 (link)

pets can go veg, but it's unnatural and more expensive than feeding a normal diet anyway (which is obviously a concern to you). there's a book you might want to check out: obligate carnivore. but unless you have tons of time to do research, tons of money to invest in this project, and enough confidence in your ability to keep up to date with all of your pets' nutritional needs on a daily basis.. don't do it. do you have a trader joe's near you? their cat food is like 33 cents a can! and it's all natural and just great. :)

(Reply to this)



If your cat is also on such a diet, what was your reasoning Veganism is a choice to stop contributing to the needless slaughter of animals, not just a diet. If I fed my cats meat based food I would be contributing to the slaughter of animals, to the inhumane treatment of animals in overcrowded stalls and coops, or to the cruel deaths from pet food industry research (IAMS for example). I personally would feel like a hypocrite being vegan and feeding the animals I care for other slaughtered animals

how'd your cat take it

Very well. His coat became shinier and the vet remarked at how healthy he

was.

how long did it take for the cat to transition etc

Two weeks, just gradually introduced the vegan food into his diet, until he only ate the vegan food. As far as the kitten, we just gave her vegan food the first day she came to live with us and has been eating it ever since.

If you have a personal recipe for vegan cat food...share! Sorry, I have no recipes to share - We use ready made vegan food however one can make vegan cat food but you should be careful to use the correct supplements and recipes which have been designed to provide the correct balance of nutrients.

(Reply to this)

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