**For the Love of Canned Food**

The saying “You are What You Eat” holds just as true for our feline friends as it does for us. There are a couple of important things to keep in mind when considering your cat’s diet. Most importantly, cats are obligate carnivores, which means they NEED meat to survive. Cats do not, however, need carbohydrates. If you think about how they eat in the wild, the small amount of carbohydrate matter that makes up their prey fulfills the small carbohydrate requirement they have. In order to make dry food, a large amount of carbohydrates are needed, which your cat does NOT need and simply cannot break down. This can lead to continuous eating because they do not feel satiated and can cause obesity, leading to insulin resistance, diabetes, and arthritis.

Cats are used to receiving water WITH their food, not drinking it separately, hence our contraptions (running faucets and fountains) to entice cats to drink more water. Some people have even gone so far as to say that our domestic cats living on dry food are chronically dehydrated, which makes sense.

Our domestic cats are very prone to urinary problems, both lower urinary as well as kidney. Feeding canned food can help prevent these conditions. If your cat already has a urinary condition, canned food can help treat or control it by increasing the amount of water intake and helping the body flush the system.

Dental disease is another ailment that can stem from dry food intake. One of the most important things you can do for your cat’s dental health is brush their teeth on a regular basis. Dental toys and treats may also be beneficial.

While cats tend to be picky, many like and even prefer the taste of canned food. Rotating food flavors may be beneficial for some, which may prevent boredom and allergies. When rotating food flavors, stick to one brand and rotate the protein source over a couple of days. If your cat is prone to gastro-intestinal upset, it may be better to stick to one brand and one protein, to prevent an upset stomach.

The benefits of canned food outweigh the possible benefits of dry food; it may seem “inconvenient,” but it’s higher quality and allows your cat’s system to respond to feeding in a more natural manner. After all, aren’t constant urinary problems and daily diabetes monitoring more “inconvenient” than paying a little more attention at dinner time?