

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Kittens, kittens, kittens! “Where are these kittens coming from?” We all know the answer and we also know the solution is spay and neutering of cats! The shelter has been inundated with kittens – some very young and needing foster care and others ready for homes. Lisa Lew, our cat expert and her super partner Angie Larsen have a huge base of knowledge about the care of kittens and cats. Each day they take on the challenges of very young kittens to older cats. Each age group has unique needs.

We have had beautiful cat adopts – some families embracing two kittens into their families. If you are a first time cat owner there is much to learn. If you are a previous cat owner, a refresher course never hurts.

The ASPCA hosts an excellent website about animal care. The following information was share by them regarding feline nutrition.



Nutrients are substances obtained from food and used by an animal as a source of energy and as part of the metabolic machinery necessary for maintenance and growth. Barring any special needs, illness-related deficiencies or instructions from your vet, your pets should be able to get all the nutrients they need from high-quality commercial pet foods, which are formulated with these special standards in mind. Here are the six essential classes of nutrients fundamental for healthy living.

Water is the most important nutrient. While food may help meet some of your pet's water needs, pets need to have fresh clean water available to them at all times. A deficiency of water can cause serious illness or even death.

Proteins are the basic building blocks for cells, tissues, organs, enzymes, hormones and antibodies, and are essential for growth, maintenance, reproduction and repair. Proteins can be obtained from a number of sources. Animal-based proteins have complete amino acid profiles. (Please note: Do not give your pet raw eggs.) Protein is also found in vegetables, cereals and soy, but these are considered incomplete proteins.

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, and are divided into essential and non-essential amino acids:

Essential amino acids cannot be synthesized by the animal in sufficient quantities and **MUST** be supplied in the diet. Essential amino acids include arginine, methionine, histidine, phenylalanine, isoleucine, threonine, leucine, tryptophan, lysine, valine and taurine*.

Non-essential amino acids can be synthesized by your pet and are not needed in the diet.

**The essential amino acid taurine is required for companion cats. Taurine is required for the prevention of eye and heart disease, as well as reproduction, fetal growth and survival. This essential amino acid is only found in foods of animal origin, such as meat, eggs and fish.*

Fats are the most concentrated form of food energy, providing your pet with more than twice the energy of proteins or carbohydrates. Fats are essential in the structure of cells and are needed for the production of some hormones. They are required for absorption and utilization of fat-soluble vitamins. Fats provide the body insulation and protection for internal organs. Essential fatty acids must be provided in a pet's diet because they cannot be synthesized by a cat in sufficient amounts. Linoleic acid is an essential fatty acid for cats. Arachidonic acid, an omega-6 fatty acid, is also essential for cats for the maintenance of the skin and coat, for kidney function and for reproduction.

Omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids play a vital role in healing inflammation. Replacing some omega-6 with omega-3 fatty acids can lessen an inflammatory reaction—whether it is in the skin (due to allergies), the joints (from arthritis), the intestines (from inflammatory bowel disease) or even in the kidneys (from progressive renal failure).

Carbohydrates provide energy for the body's tissues, play a vital role in the health of the intestine, and are likely to be important for reproduction. While there is no minimum carbohydrate requirement, there is a minimum glucose requirement necessary to supply energy to critical organs (i.e. the brain). Fibers are kinds of carbohydrates that modify the mix of the bacterial population in the small intestine, which can help manage chronic diarrhea. For cats to obtain the most benefit from fiber, the fiber source must be moderately fermentable. Foods that are high in fiber are not good for cats with high energy requirements, such as those who are young and growing.

Vitamins are catalysts for enzyme reactions. Tiny amounts of vitamins are essential to cats for normal metabolic functioning. Most vitamins cannot be synthesized in the body, and therefore are essential in the diet.

When feeding a complete and balanced diet, it is unnecessary to give a vitamin or mineral supplement unless a specific deficiency is diagnosed by a veterinarian. Over supplementation can result in poisoning with some key vitamins and minerals!

Minerals are inorganic compounds that are not metabolized and yield no energy. These nutrients cannot be synthesized by animals and must be provided in the diet. In general, minerals are most important as structural constituents of bones and teeth, for maintaining fluid balance and for their involvement in many metabolic reactions.

NOTES: We are looking for volunteers that can help with pricing at the Thrift Shop. The specific days are Tuesday and/or Thursday, 11 am to 3 p.m. It is fun to do, you never know what treasures may come in, you meet nice people and you will make a difference for the animals at the shelter. The shop is located on 3rd Street and Dakota. Please give me a call at home if you are able to help. 715-634-4543.

Bakers are getting ready for the Holiday bake sale – if you are a baker, let Alecia Austin, our shelter manager know. 715-634-5394.