

### **What about corn? I've heard that I should stay away from diets with corn as the first ingredient.**

This is a misperception. High-quality corn, properly cooked, provides a digestibility greater than 80%, while lower grade corn will be significantly less digestible. Corn is an excellent carbohydrate (energy) source in dry diets and helps form the kibble. What is important is the combination of high quality ingredients that make up the TOTAL diet!

### **Why do veterinarians offer specific diets?**

Veterinarians used to mainly treat disease. Now, our approach focuses much more on health care, a total approach which includes veterinary care, exercise and nutrition. Working with our clients on the "Circle of Health" will help prevent disease and improve quality of life and longevity for their pets. Nutrition plays a key role in our approach. It is our responsibility to assure our clients that the diets we recommend are extensively researched and monitored, incorporate unique ingredients and are of exceptional quality. We see tremendous improvements in pets fed these diets. The regular interactions you have with our hospital staff allows us to monitor and ensure your pet's optimal health and provide you with opportunities to ask questions. It is entirely probable that your pet may eat 6 or 7 different diets over the course of his or her lifetime to best address their different life stages and health needs. It is our goal to proactively address these changes and needs to help your pet achieve his or her peak potential.



### **Many commercially available cat foods now advertise that they will help prevent urinary tract problems. Why wouldn't I use one of those?**

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) continues to be a concern for cats. We now know, through ongoing research efforts, that FLUTD is not a simple disease caused by a singular factor, such as ash content. There are a number of disorders that make up this complex disease, including idiopathic cystitis (in 70% of cats with FLUTD), bacterial infections, and crystals and stones (struvite, oxalate, urate, etc.). It is increasingly important that we make dietary recommendations and changes on an individual cat basis. Physical exam findings, laboratory results, environmental considerations, age of cat and body condition all impact diet choice. As your pet's health care provider, we can monitor diet influences and make appropriate changes and recommendations to best meet your cat's needs.

### **What about raw food?**

Raw foods (particularly meat and eggs) are not recommended. Food poisoning, parasitic infection and nutrient deficiencies are all potential outcomes of feeding raw food. Many of the microorganisms present in raw meat can be passed on to people. These present a very real hazard to the health of your family. Bones, both raw and cooked, are not safe for your pet. They can damage teeth and cause obstruction in the mouth, throat, stomach and gastrointestinal tract in both dogs and cats. A raw food diet can result in improper bone development, where normal growth is not supported. The outcome can be pain, compromised mobility and poor quality of life. There are simply too many risks associated with raw food diets for us to support their use.

### **What about price? Diets available through veterinary hospitals seem to be significantly higher in cost than other pet foods I can buy.**

We know it can certainly look that way. Veterinary diets use high quality ingredients which provide exceptional nutrition. Typically you will feed a smaller amount of food and your bag of veterinary diet will last longer, making the cost per day to feed your pet a high quality veterinary diet comparable to a grocery store brand.

The following might help put cost in perspective:

Cats (approx. 5 kg or 11 lb)	
Type of Diet**	Approx. Cost (\$) Per Day
Dry	0.55 - 0.75
Dry and Canned	1.25 - 1.75
Canned	2.25 - 2.75

Dogs** (Dry Food)*		
Size	Weight	Approx. Cost (\$) Per Day
Small	10 kg (23 lb)	0.60 - 0.75
Medium	23 kg (50 lb)	0.90 - 1.20
Large	34 kg (75 lb)	1.10 - 1.50

\* Add 50 cents/day for "top dressing" with canned  
\*\*Modi-Cal/Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Preventive\*\*

**Think about it - we can feed our pets exceptional diets at a daily cost equivalent to a cup of coffee or a bottle of water!**



### **Why choose dry vs. canned, and what about flavours?**

Dry diets are more economical and are easier to store and keep fresh. Canned diets tend to be more palatable for the fussy eater. We may recommend canned diets to help increase water intake for pets with certain medical conditions. Combining a little bit of canned food with some dry food is a popular way to feed pets. Most pets, once accustomed to and thriving on an excellent diet, do not require change.

### **Are organic or natural foods safer?**

Not necessarily. "Natural" is defined under AAFCO as "any ingredient which has not been chemically altered". However, even added vitamins and minerals, which are essential to a balanced diet, would result in the diet no longer being "natural". Organic food regulations are very vague at this time. The term "organic" may be put on the label even if only one ingredient is certified as organic. "Natural" or "organic" ingredients could still be subject to bacterial contamination or mycotoxins produced from moulds and yeasts. This has been documented numerous times particularly in human foods (e.g. carrot juice, tomatoes, strawberries, beans, peppers, etc.).

