

BECOMING A STRAY CAT FEEDER

It's great that you want to help stray cats in your area! Since there is an overpopulation of street animals and not enough food for them all, many stray cats are underweight and sick. By giving them a regular supply of appropriate food, you can help keep them healthy.

BENEFITS OF FEEDING STRAY CATS

- Stray cats get nutritious food every day which improves their health
- Stray cats learn to become friendlier to people
- Meal times can be used to keep track of cats in your area
- Stray cats get used to being handled which makes it easier to catch them for sterilization or medical treatment
- You make new furry friends!

WHAT YOU NEED

Most people use plastic or steel bowls to feed their animals and take the containers with them when the cats are done. Some cats might feel suspicious of bowls since it is a new object. In this case, meals can initially be given on a piece of newspaper. We also recommend an airtight container or bag to store the dry food that you can carry with you. A measuring spoon from the kitchen can ensure you place the same amount every meal. If you are feeding wet food, a water-resistant bag or container to store the empty food bowls after meals is recommended.

WHAT TO FEED

Cats are carnivores and require a meat-based diet. While there are ways to prepare homemade meals for cats, it can be complicated and expensive to acquire the right ingredients to meet nutritional requirements. Handling meat also comes with the risk of spreading unwanted bacteria and parasites in your home and potentially causing gastrointestinal infections in cats if the meat is not cooked properly. Hence ready-made cat food that is already available in pet stores is the safest way to feed stray cats. Although wet food packets and cans are available on the market, dry kibble is the least expensive and most convenient form of commercial cat food since it can be stored and distributed easily.

Some common brands of adult cat food available in stores are:

Drools (Rs. 257/Kg)

Eminent (Variable price)

Let's Bite (Rs. 238/Kg)

Meo (Rs. 225/Kg)

Mito (Rs. 350/Kg)

Purepet (Rs. 143/Kg)

Whiskas (Rs. 204/Kg)

(These prices are from online stores - your local pet store might sell these brands at a different price or even a discount!)

HOW MUCH TO FEED

For an active, adult cat weighing 3-6 kgs, the recommended amount of dry food is anywhere from 3/4 cup to 1 cup a day. Growing kittens and pregnant or nursing female cats need more nutrients than regular adult cats, so can be given lots of high calorie kitten food (available in several brands in dry or wet form). You can check the food measurement table on the back of your bag of cat food for more guidance. If a cat is underweight (visible ribs, very narrow waist, very little palpable fat) it can be given more food. If a cat is obese (ribs barely palpable under fat, no tuck in waist) it can be given less food.

Meals can be given 1-2 times a day. If meals are provided regularly at the same time every day, the cats quickly learn when and where to expect food and might even wait for you. Meal times are a good time to observe and keep track of any changes in the health and temperament of the cats.

HOW TO APPROACH CATS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Before approaching a cat with food, first try to observe where the cat is most comfortable relaxing. If a cat seems to always hang out near a particular shop or building, it might already have a feeder. If you notice that a cat hangs out in one spot, bring a dish of food there at the same time and location each day. Put the bowl on the ground and walk away so that the cat will feel comfortable enough to approach the food. Do not try to pet or approach the cat as many street cats are shy and wary of people. Try not to stare at the cat or face it directly. Hang back several feet and observe the cat from a distance. It might take a few days for the cat to become accustomed to your presence. Some cats are more social and might even solicit attention and pets from you.

WHERE TO FEED

We advise feeding cats outside of your residential premises so as not to cause trouble with neighbours or administration. Choose an accessible spot close to your residence where cats are unlikely to be affected by passing cars, dogs or foot traffic. Higher spaces are always a good idea, eg. sides of walls, empty benches or chairs, empty street hawker carts. Make sure to feed cats individually a few feet apart from each other to ensure that every cat eats and there is no fight over food.

HOW TO CLEAN UP

Make sure to clean up after meals. Some businesses and housing societies might have an issue if food is left out to attract other animals, rodents and insects. Wait for 10-15 mins after feeding and pick up the bowls. This conditions the cats to expect the food to be cleared after a certain amount of time so the time to finish is now.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

By feeding cats regularly, you are helping the cats get used to you. Eventually you might even be to touch them and pet them. This will be useful when it comes to taking cats for vet visits or getting them sterilized. It is advisable to get all healthy stray cats sterilized so that they do not have unwanted litters. Cats should also be vaccinated yearly and given parasite protection to ensure the health of the colony.

Feeders are encouraged to consult and assist animal welfare organizations in providing routine healthcare to stray cats. It is useful to keep pictures and records of every cat's sterilization and medical history when participating in spay/neuter/vaccination drives.

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING STRAY CATS! YOU ARE MAKING A HUGE
DIFFERENCE TO THEIR LIVES.**

For queries or assistance, you can email us at info@thefelinefoundation.com.
Check out our website at www.thefelinefoundation.com

TILL THE LAST ONE IS SAFE