

MEDIA RELEASE from

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Fat cats say enough is enough!

Overweight felines are in danger of reaching extreme proportions if their owners do not take steps to monitor their diet this winter, warned Cats Protection today.

"Recently, overweight and obese cats have been a source of media interest and amusement. However, the reality is that a feline carrying too much weight has the increased potential for developing serious health problems such as diabetes, osteoarthritis and various other disorders. The winter months can be a particularly bad time for weight gain as cats, like humans, tend to be more inactive," said Rhona Simms, Cats Protection's Chief Veterinary Officer.

"A common concern amongst cat owners is that neutering can cause a cat to gain weight," said Ms Simms. "We can assure those with unneutered cats that this is not the case and would urge them to get their cat spayed or castrated as soon as possible."

Cats Protection the UK's oldest feline welfare organisation, is urging owners to practical steps to ensure their cats stay healthy and in good shape during the colder months and beyond.

The charity has recently published an informative guide, 'Feeding Felines', for anyone interested to learn about healthy eating and nutritional advice for cats. The leaflet can be obtained by calling Cats Protection's National Helpline on ☎ 01403 221 919 (Monday - Friday from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm).

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Notes to editors:

1. For further information contact Emma Osborne, Cats Protection Press Officer, ☎ 01403 221 934, emma.osborne@cats.org.uk or Rob Hall, Stourbridge Branch Public Relations Officer, ☎ 07884 432306, rob@stourbridgecats.org.uk.

2. 'Feeding Felines' provides nutritional advice for cats from birth right through to old age. It also covers the use of dried foods and how to cope with a poor eater as well as some general important feline nutritional facts.

3. Top tips for keeping a cat's weight under control:

- Do not feed a cat on demand. If this is happening, gradually cut out titbits between meals and reduce feeding to twice a day.
- If puss is fed on complete dried food, make sure that only the recommended amount is given by weighing it out before serving it.

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1 of 2 *More follows...*

- If puss has difficulty maintaining the correct weight, he should be fed on a 'light' variety of food with a reduced energy content.
- Do not let a cat dictate what he will eat. A normal cat will not starve himself and a choosy cat is made, not born.
- Cats shouldn't be given milk as a substitute for water – it is a food and will cause puss to gain weight.

4. Other useful feline nutritional tips:

- A cat's dietary needs change according to age and state of health.
- Never feed a cat a meat-free diet. Cats are carnivores and must have amino acids and taurine that can almost only be found in meat.
- A fresh food diet needs to be well balanced to ensure puss gets the right amount of vitamins, taurine and essential fatty acids.
- A correct diet can help with many common old-age feline illnesses.
- A vet should see any cat that doesn't eat for more than a few days.
- Food should be fed at room temperature and not direct from the fridge.

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