

## THE FELINE CONSULTANT

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## Conversation starter: What do you feed your cat?

Many of my clients are desperate to have a conversation about cat nutrition and the specific situation with their cat/s. They have sick cats suffering from allergies, GI issues or very serious conditions like diabetes or stomatitis.

And they want a little more information than the medical advice given to them by their veterinarians.

The amount of money one can spend on diagnostic tests and/or prescription diets can be exorbitant. Some have been to multiple vets with no improvement in their pet's nutritional issues. Frustrated they start investigating on the internet and are desperate for solutions.

**Please allow me to share my opinion why this is happening and what we can do to better.**

At the end our goal is to have happy and healthy pets!

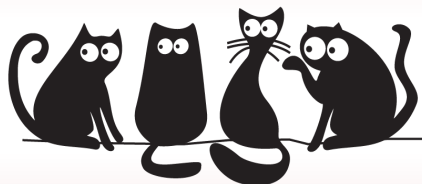
First, let me say that I am not a veterinarian. I have the utmost respect for them. They have extensive training and a long road of learning behind them. And they do their absolute best to provide you and your pets with exemplary service and healthcare.

Many small animal veterinarians lack in-depth training in pet nutrition or diet formulation. There are board certified veterinarian nutritionists who undergo specialized training in nutrition and are qualified to consult on nutritional issues. Those vets are rare and not to be confused with holistic vets.

Most small animal practices do not have certified nutrition specialists on staff.

So, without specialized nutritional training, vets try to be as helpful as they can, but often are limited to relaying nutritional information they received from their pet food vendors like Hills, Royal Canin or Purina. As a result, the offered solutions usually point heavily towards the prescription diets available at their practice.





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Some veterinarians may offer raw diet recipes based on their own experience. Raw diets are not for everyone, and not for every pet. If you or your pet are already suffering from a compromised immune system this may not be the way to go. In addition, food safety risks must be taken into consideration.

Blaming all allergies on chicken or corn is also a very common complaint reported by clients, even though there are no reputable peer-reviewed research papers to back these claims up. Celiac disease, gluten intolerance is well researched in humans, but not so much in companion animals.

As the parent of fur babies, myself, I totally understand being overwhelmed by nutritional issues like food allergies or diabetes in our beloved pets.

I also understand the desperation and willingness to try **ANYTHING** to resolve the issues. Additionally, the many nutritional options for issues like weight management, joint health and cognitive wellbeing get confusing. Conflicting advice as to the merits of grain-free diets or the challenges of finding a diet your cat will readily eat!

But every pet food advertisement and article in the popular press tells pet owners to consult a veterinarian for nutritional advice and I just told you veterinarians are not nutritionists.

## Where do we go from here?

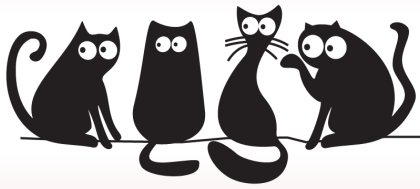
My recommendation is to find a professional animal nutritionist. They will be able to give you a lot of background on how diets are formulated and how to read an ingredient deck. And have them work together with your vet to see how a diet impacts the wellbeing or blood results.

## Pet nutrition is equal parts science and art.

The truth is that it is relatively easy to make a diet on paper. All one need do is look up the nutritional requirements in the NRC table and mix ingredients that will hit those marks. What requires greater in-depth knowledge and experience is knowing how to balance the diet AND make it taste good AND utilize readily available ingredients AND successfully deal with issues like food allergies, diabetes, or urinary stones.

Diets formulated by a nutritionist utilize specialized software to assure minimum and balanced levels of essential nutrients. This software is expensive and necessary when you are serious about meeting nutritional guidelines. *There is no guesswork!* Additionally, diets are sent off for laboratory analysis to verify nutrient levels.





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When raw diets are formulated, there are food safety issues that must be addressed in addition to issues of palatability and nutrient density.

**In short, pet nutrition is complicated! It takes years of education and experience. This is a serious profession.**

If you find yourself frustrated in dealing with nutritional issues in your fur babies please contact me. I will work with you and your veterinarian on your pet's nutritional and health goals and examine the current diet to provide solutions to alleviate your pet's issues. I give options working within the framework of your current diet. I can also deliver custom recipes and optimized meal plans or provide options from my own menu of pet food products, if so desired.

**My passion is to provide you with science backed information that provides a tailormade solution for your cat's nutritional needs.**

