**Mixed Feeding Guide for Cats**

Advantages of Mixed Feeding in Cats

What is mixed feeding for your cat?

Mixed feeding means combining dry kibble with wet foods, whether they be casserole style, a 'loaf', 'chunks in gravy or jelly' or pate/mousse-like formats.

Why is adding wet food to dry kibbles beneficial to cats?

Provide Enrichment

Cats are curious creatures. Adding variations to the types of food to cats can make their feeding time more enriching. However, cats are also known to be ‘fussy’ – this is because their food preferences are developed when they are still kittens. Hence, it is important to introduce a variety of kitten food types and flavours early on in their lives. Most adult cats prefer a novel food over a currently fed food that aren’t radically different from those they are accustomed to. Wet cat food comes in various textures and flavours, and is generally easily digestible, meaning you can switch them up without a transition period in most cases, unless your cat has a sensitive tummy.

The Importance of Water

The domestic cats have descended from desert animals, the African Wildcats (Felis silvestris lybica). And perhaps because of this, domestic cats have low thirst drive and ability to concentrate their urine, meaning they can survive on less water (compared to dogs) and tolerate a low level of dehydration up to 4% of body weight1. However, this also makes them more prone to kidney disease and lower urinary tract diseases such as bladder stones (subsequently urethral blockages), urinary tract infections, cystitis (inflammation of the bladder), as a result of dehydration.

A low thirst drive means cats fail to drink more even when they are suffering from minor dehydration. A study2 looking at the total fluid intakes of cats fed different types of foods shows that cats fed solely dry food consumes less total water compared to cats that are fed both dry and wet foods, even when they are given free access to clean drinking water. This shows that mixed feeding is an effective way to provide hydration to your cat.

Useful tool for Administering Medications

Giving medications to your cat can be stressful for both you and your cat. Wet food provides an easier way to hide medicines, whether they are in tablet, powder, or liquid form. You can even ground up a tablet or sprinkle the contents of a capsule in wet cat food. Just be mindful that some cats may avoid the food mixed with medication. So always put the medication in only a small amount of wet food and make sure your cat finishes the entire amount before offering more food. And if you are still having trouble, speak to your vet as there may be other options available.

For your Older Cats

Older cats tend to have reduced appetite. Wet cat food generally has good palatability, and many older cats enjoy the softer consistency, licking it up rather than chewing on hard kibbles. By mixed feeding at a younger age, your cat is better adapted to wet food, and you are less likely to encounter transition issues when they grow older.