



# THE NATURAL AUTHORITY™

## ON MIXED FEEDING IN CATS

### Introduction

Mixed feeding refers to feeding pets a combination of both wet food and dry kibble. While wet products are more commonly fed in European markets, US pet owners often consider wet food as a “treat” rather than a healthy main meal option. However, mixed feeding can provide health benefits for cats.

### What health benefits are provided by mixed feeding in cats?

**Urinary Tract Health** – Because wet food contains high moisture content, feeding part or all of the diet as wet food increases the intake of water and increases the amount of urine produced. Increased urine volume is an important factor in urinary tract health because it decreases the concentration of urine and increases the frequency of urination, both of which help prevent the formation of mineral crystals or urinary stones.

**Weight Management** – Research conducted at The Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition shows that feeding cats a high moisture diet causes cats to eat less, gain less bodyweight for every calorie they eat, and increase their activity level compared to cats that are fed only a dry diet. Additionally, feeding part of the diet as wet food can influence pet owner behavior by helping them consider portion control when deciding how much of each format to feed.

**Additional Benefits** – Compared to dry foods, wet foods have higher inclusions of real meats and lower inclusions of carbohydrate sources, such as grains. Not only does this make wet foods more “natural” with a higher real meat inclusion, but it also provides higher levels of protein and lower levels of carbohydrates. This difference in the balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates can be beneficial in maintaining a *healthy metabolism* and helping to satisfy a cat’s *instinctive feeding behavior*. In fact, based on a large number of studies, The Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition discovered cats modify their eating habits, consistently selecting diets rich in protein and low in carbohydrates to achieve a specific nutrient profile in their diet. This preferred nutrient composition is similar to what cats would eat in the wild, and similar to the nutrient composition of wet foods. Additionally, when given the opportunity, cats prefer to eat a mixture of both wet and dry foods and prefer to eat many small meals throughout the day, which is best achieved through a dry food format since wet food spoils overtime. Dry kibble has beneficial effects on *oral health* by scraping plaque and tartar from the surface of teeth. Providing part of the diet as dry kibble would maintain this benefit, as long as dry and wet products are fed separately.

### How much wet and dry foods should I feed my pet?

According to levels shown to be beneficial in WALTHAM® studies, the following proportions of wet and dry food are recommended for mixed feeding programs that support:

- Weight Management: At least 1/3 of the total daily volume should be fed as wet food.
- Urinary Tract Health: At least 3/4 of the total daily volume fed should be fed as wet food

**A mixed feeding program for an average sized indoor cat would include approximately ½ cup of NATURAL CHOICE® Indoor Active Health Adult dry food plus one 3 oz. can of NATURAL CHOICE® Indoor Adult Chicken & Giblets. This would provide at least 1/3 wet food by volume to help support a weight management benefit.**



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