

FISH FACTS

Fish is a four-letter word for “Spend Money at the Vets”

Info provided by All Cats Veterinary Clinic 713-664-2287

Despite popular belief, fish is NOT good for cats to eat. Fish is actually an allergen for cats. You'll find fish in lots of cat foods because it's tasty to cats and draws them to the food. But, fish can give cats health problems. Cats are a desert species and there is NO food source in the desert with fins. Fish is NOT a proper protein source for cats.

#1 Fish Problem: An Allergen

Fish are an allergen, meaning it creates an allergy in your animal when they eat it. If you want to give your cat an infrequent treat, try small bits of dehydrated chicken liver or freeze-dried chicken hearts. Skip the fish. Feed something with fur or feathers, not fins. It's kinder and safer for your cat.

#2 Fish Problem: Urinary Tract Problems

Fish, with its high magnesium content, can contribute to urinary tract problems. (The discovery of magnesium as a culprit in feline urinary tract disorders was accompanied by the development of specialized 'urinary tract' formula foods. The idea with these foods was to add acid to the food, reasoning that magnesium crystals develop in alkaline, not acid urine. The problem is that cats with high urinary tract acid are prone to another type of crystal formation called calcium oxylate.)

#3 Fish Problem: Link to Hyperthyroidism

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study in 2007 revealed a disturbing link between feline hyperthyroidism and cats' consumption of fish. In the study, cats eating canned fish were exposed to polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) that were 5 times higher than cats eating poultry or beef canned foods.

#4 Fish Problem: Addiction

Cats adore the taste of fish. Anyone who's ever opened up a can of tuna fish within smelling distance of a hungry feline knows that. But, you can quickly end up with a 'fish addict' on your hands. The last thing you need is a cat on a hunger strike refusing to eat anything but an inferior fish diet.

#5 Fish Problem: Thiamin Destruction

Fish contains high amounts of an enzyme called thiaminase. This is an enzyme that destroys Vitamin B-1 (thiamin). A thiamin-deficient diet can lead to neurological problems and seizures in cats.

#6 Fish Problem: Low Calcium Levels

Whole fish, even with bone, is far too low in calcium for cats. The ratio of calcium to phosphorus levels is crucial in cats. If calcium levels are too low, then phosphorus levels creep up and are very bad for cats, especially those with kidney problems. Remember: if you're producing homemade cat food, one of the most important things to be accurate is the ratio of calcium to phosphorus.

#7 Fish Problem: Heavy Metals

There is a great deal of research showing that predatory fish (those at the very top of the food chain and the same ones found in pet food and used in cat 'treats') have extremely high levels of heavy metals like mercury, pesticides and other toxins. A 2004 study, published in Acta Neuropathologica, discovered neurological disturbances in young kittens fed tuna daily that contained the US FDA **approved** levels of mercury (0.5 ppm).

#8 Fish Problem: Vitamin E Depletion

Felines love fish, but eating it long-term can deplete a cat's stores of vitamin E. It can also lead to an extraordinarily painful condition called steatitis, with symptoms of hypersensitivity to touch and loss of appetite.