

## My cat isn't eating

### Overview

- Is your cat eating less than usual? Most cats graze throughout the day, so if this natural behaviour stops, it's usually a sign that something is wrong.
- Many different problems can cause a reduced appetite.
- Take your cat to the vet for a check-up if they lose their appetite.

### General information

It can be very worrying when your cat stops eating. Without food, cats are at risk of a liver condition called hepatic lipidosis. For this reason, always have your cat checked by your vet if their appetite changes.

### Why has my cat stopped eating?

There are many causes for a reduced appetite, including:

- **Dental disease** - tooth and gum disease is painful and can put cats off eating.
- **Stress** – e.g. a change in routine, moving home or fighting with another cat.
- **Kidney disease** - often causes vomiting, increased thirst and a reduced appetite.
- **Pain** - pain often causes a reduced appetite.
- **High temperature** - a high temperature (fever) usually decreases the appetite.
- **Change of food or feeding location** - changing your cat's food suddenly or moving their bowl from its usual place may

stop them eating. Read our guide on how to safely change your cat's diet.

- **Other diseases** – very many other problems such as heart disease, pancreatitis, liver disease and cancer will reduce appetite.

### How will I know if my cats' not eating?

It may be tricky to tell if your cat has stopped eating if you have more than one cat, or a dog that hoovers up their food. Other tell-tale signs you might see when a cat has a reduced appetite include:

- Weight loss
- Low energy (lethargy)
- Jaundice (yellow tinge to skin, gums and eyes)
- Drooling more than usual
- A painful mouth (pawing at mouth, hissing or backing away from food, only chewing on one side)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Increased thirst

### When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment if your cat stops eating. It's important to find out the reason your cat is off their food, but it is also important to get them eating again to prevent liver problems (hepatic lipidosis) from developing. You know your cat best, if you are concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

**Find out whether you are eligible for free or low cost PDSA veterinary treatment using our checker below or visit [www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility)**

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