If you do give a snack or a treat, or any dry food at all, use it to encourage **exercise**. **Food puzzles** are devices that require your kitty to work at it a bit to get the food out. We sell such devices at A Cat’s View. A non-spendy way to achieve this is to take an empty soda 20 oz. plastic bottle, drill or punch holes in it that are big enough for a kibble to roll out, but not big enough for your kitty to get his nose stuck. Put a few kibbles inside, show your kitty how they can come out, and let her have at it. Also, if your kitty is so inclined, you can show her a kibble, wad it up in paper and throw it. These types of toys cause increased calorie burning, and also give the psychological benefit of satisfying the **prey sequence**. Kitty chases, catches...and eats. (Laser toys, by the way, frustrate this natural sequence instinct, so, go ahead and use them if your kitty likes the chase, but follow up with a game that lets your kitty actually get ahold of a tangible object. I love wand toys for this. Kitty moves a lot while I just flick my wrist. Lazy? (I prefer to think of it as efficient.) Kitty’s natural exercise pattern is short frequent burst of energy needed to catch many tiny meals a day. Five minutes three or more times a day is great. When walking through the room, have a wand toy handy.

Even 30 seconds is great as the unexpected bursts help keep your kitty toned and ready. The best thing about exercise is that your kitty can be allowed up to 20% more calories in the diet just by adding exercise! ~

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**Feline Hepatic Lipidosis**

A Cat’s View Veterinary Hospital

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A feeding tube is a surgically placed tube, but it’s not as big as it sounds. Kitties do really well with them, and it makes medicating and feeding your kitty a breeze.

**Prevention** involves getting your kitty to lose weight. Obesity is defined as body weight 15 to 20% above ideal weight with the excess being fat. Carbohydrates are almost always the cause, as cats are carnivores lacking the enzyme to adequately handle a diet that has more than just a little carbs. Virtually all dry foods out there have way too much carbohydrate. Cats put the carbs into storage and continue to use protein for energy. Eventually this leads to a cat with a lot of fat and little muscle. Since muscle can “burn” carbs, the low muscle mass makes things worse. Your kitty needs a very low carb diet with high amounts of protein and moderate amounts of fat. If your kitty will eat them, we may add vitamins and supplements to promote liver health and weight loss. Also, we need to cut down on the amount your kitty is eating to aim for a 1-2% of body weight loss every week. Losing weight too quickly is dangerous for an overweight cat and it can take 9 months to a year to bring an obese kitty to optimal weight. So how much should your kitty be eating and what? Well, one way to figure that is: Estimated lean body weight in kilograms times 0.7 to give average requirements for maintaining current weight. Then if we cut back 15 to 20% from there we have a weight loss diet.

An easier way, that also adjusts for your cat’s metabolic rate and activity level, is to just switch to an all canned grain free, high quality food, see how much your kitty will eat over about 4 days, take the average eaten on a day and from there cut back 15 to 20%. So, if you switch to Evo, Wellness, Metabolic Diet, or another good canned diet and your kitty eats a whole can over the course of the day on the average, then cut back to about 80% of a can over the course of the day. Canned foods are much lower in carbs and the extra moisture help give your kitty a feeling of fullness.

**Easiest yet,** we’ll agree on a selection of good quality canned foods, you tell me how much your cat wants to eat a day and I’ll tell you how much to feed. Regular weight checks are important to make sure we’re on track.

**Raw** diets are also a good option for some households. If you are interested in feeding a raw diet we can discuss the particulars and precautions at your kitty’s office visit.

Don’t forget any snacks or treats when we discuss what your kitty is eating. The perfect snack is a bit of unseasoned boiled or baked chicken or turkey or even a bit of fish. I say unseasoned as garlic and onion and their juices are toxic to cats and can break down the red blood cells causing a fatal anemia if not treated. Best just to stay away from the seasonings. (Continued on back)