

## Care of Cats with Kidney Disease

Hydration is imperative for maintaining kidney function. Feeding an all-wet diet can do a lot for keeping kidneys healthy and cats with renal insufficiency comfortable. In cases, where an all-wet diet isn't enough to maintain hydration, sub-cutaneous (sub-q) fluids can be beneficial, and typically can be administered at home. There are also medications that may be useful.

For more information, please visit  
[www.felineoutreach.org](http://www.felineoutreach.org).



Feline Outreach Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the care of companion animals, specifically cats.

The information contained is for general informational purposes only, and is no substitute for your own research or the advice of a veterinarian.

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# *Kitty's Kidneys*



Feline chronic renal  
insufficiency and  
chronic renal failure





## Diet

Our domesticated cats originated in the desert. They have a low thirst drive, and count on the moisture inherent in their diet for most of their water consumption. Studies indicate cats fed dry food drink more water than cats fed canned, but not enough more to compensate for the lack of moisture in their diet.

Moisture is imperative for kidney health. All cats, but especially cats with renal insufficiency, should consume canned or other wet food.

It was believed that low-protein diets might be beneficial for cats with CRF, but studies indicate that low protein diets actually elevate Creatinine levels and exacerbate the anemia and muscle wastage commonly secondary to renal issues. Feeding a diet containing a high quality protein can improve the quality of life for cats with CRF. High quality proteins are easily digestible proteins such as poultry or rabbit

muscle and organ meat. Grains and grain glutens are not easily digestible, and it may be desirable to avoid them.

Limiting phosphorus in the diet may be beneficial. Choice of diets low in phosphorus yet containing high-quality proteins may be limited. Another option is to use a phosphorus binder, as described below.

## Sub-q fluids

Sub-cutaneous (or sub-q) fluids can benefit cats for whom an all-wet diet isn't enough to maintain adequate hydration. Fluids can be given at home. Adding injectable B-complex to the fluids can further combat the anemia commonly secondary to CRF. B-vitamins are water-soluble and can be flushed out of the system with excessive drinking or urination, or with the administration of fluids, so replenishing them with sub-q fluids is a good option. Injecting B-complex undiluted can sting, but adding to fluids can keep them comfortable.

## Medications and Supplements

As noted above, phosphorus binders can prevent phosphorus from accumulating in the system. Cats with renal insufficiency do best when phosphorus levels, as shown in the bloodwork, are maintained near the lower end of the laboratory's reference range.

Some studies have shown Benazapril, an ACE inhibitor, to improve prognosis of cats with CRF. It may improve blood flow to the kidneys.

Calcitriol, a form of vitamin D, has also shown to benefit some cats. Owners report the activity level and general well-being of their cats seemed to improve on this medication. It may be of particular benefit to cats with both CRF and hyper-thyroidism.

Supplements such as vitamin B-complex and omega fatty acids (salmon oil) may also be beneficial.

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