

## Supplements for cats

Do cats need supplements? And if so, which supplements are beneficial to cats? These are commonly asked questions from concerned cat owners, who want to make sure they are giving their cat everything he or she needs for a long, healthy life.

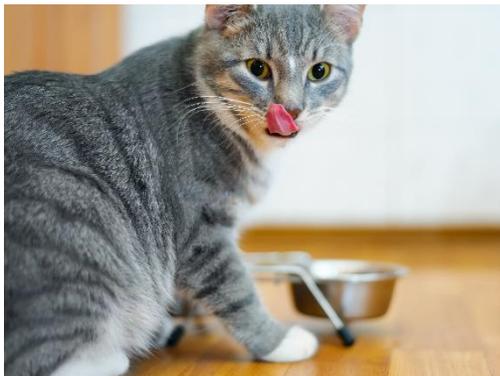
### **What is a supplement?**

Supplements are products which are given in addition to a cat's normal diet. Both vets and members of the Pet Food Institute say if your cat is generally healthy, a good quality balanced cat food should contain all your cat needs to lead a full, healthy life. Giving your cat more vitamins or minerals could cause more harm than good, and it's important to follow veterinary advice.

### **When should I give my cat a supplement?**

A healthy cat eating a balanced, complete cat food should not require additional supplements. Supplements may be recommended if your cat is sick. They can be used to support health if your cat is suffering from conditions such as joint pain, skin disease, gut problems and liver disease. Some supplements may also be recommended to calm your cat during periods of stress. It's important to remember that you can harm your cat by giving her too many supplements. Before buying a supplement, ask your vet which kind is best suited for your cat's life stage and medical condition.

### **How to choose a supplement for your cat**



Cats of different ages and lifestyles have very different needs. It is important to choose supplements recommended by vets, as many are untested and unproven. Your vet will recommend a product with reliable quality and which follows the guidelines set out by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

Do not use different supplements together, as they may contain the same or similar ingredients, which may result in toxicity. Alternatively, they may contain ingredients which are not compatible with each other.

### **Types of Cat Supplements**

**Vitamins and minerals:** There are many single or multivitamin products available for cats. However, most cat foods contain all the necessary vitamins and minerals that a cat needs so these supplements are not generally recommended.

**Essential fatty acids:** Omega-3 fatty acids are usually recommended to help maintain skin and coat health. They also support a cat's immune system, liver, eyes, brain and joints. An additional benefit of Omega-3s may be in boosting heart health and fighting high cholesterol.

**#Rainbow  
OnMyShelf**

[vitaanimalhealth.com](http://vitaanimalhealth.com)

**Probiotics:** Probiotics are supplements of “good” bacteria that help improve digestive health. They contain microorganisms such as Lactobacillus, which help to control the overgrowth of “bad” bacteria in the large intestine.

**Liver supplements:** These may be recommended to support liver health, as liver disease is not uncommon in cats. They usually contain a combination of anti-oxidants (such as silymarin from milk thistle) and vitamins, which can be depleted in liver disease.

**Calming supplements:** These often contain a combination of amino acids which support the production of serotonin, which has a calming effect. These are often in combination with vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids to help support brain health.

### Nutraceuticals for cats



Nutraceuticals comprise of foods, or extracts from foods, that confer medicinal benefits. Some of the most common include:

- Glucosamine – to support joint mobility.
- Chondroitin – to support healthy bones and joints. It is often found with glucosamine.
- Milk thistle – to remove toxins from the liver. It may be recommended for cats with liver disease.

### Cat Supplements to Avoid

It is important to be understand that natural does not always mean safe or effective. There are many naturally occurring plant toxins, and many vitamins and minerals taken in excess can have toxic effects. Unfortunately, there are supplements available which can actually do more harm than good. Always check the label and ask your vet if a product is safe before giving it to your cat. Here are some of the most common ones to avoid:

- Onion and garlic (plants of the allium family): destroy red blood cells, leading to anaemia
- Calcium: too much can be toxic (only use in pregnant or lactating queens under veterinary supervision)
- Vitamin D: too much can be toxic leading neurological signs, calcium deposits and weak bones
- Vitamin C: too much can cause overly acidic urine, which can lead to urine crystal formation
- Vitamin A: too much can cause bones to fuse, leading to reduced mobility

*Vita's veterinary-exclusive nutritional supplements benefit from robust quality control and high concentration and purity of active ingredients. Read more about our full range of supplements for cats [here](#).*

**#Rainbow  
OnMyShelf**

[vitaanimalhealth.com](http://vitaanimalhealth.com)