



Why Is My Cat Not Eating? 8 Reasons and What to Do
Placeholder for the "Links" field



<?xml version="1.0"?>

Why Is My Cat Not Eating? 8 Reasons and What to Do

Published August 5, 2025

SHARE

- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Facebook \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Twitter \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Pinterest \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Download \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Email \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?> .st0 { fill: #e5c883; } Print \(opens in same window\)](#)



It can be scary when your cat won't eat. If you're like us, your mind immediately jumps to the worst-case scenario and all you want to do is make them better as fast as possible!

But, most of the time, a change in diet isn't the end of the world and they'll return to their normal diet in a day or two.

In this article, we help set your mind at ease by discussing some of the most common reasons that your cat won't eat and what you can do to help them get back to normal.

Table of Contents

- [Reasons Your Cat Won't Eat](#)
- [What to Do When Your Cat Won't Eat](#)



Common Reasons Your Cat Won't Eat

1) Illness

If you notice that your cat won't eat, they could be suffering from a kitty cold. Cats can develop upper respiratory infections from viruses and bacteria in their environment or from other cats.

Symptoms are very similar to what you experience when you have a cold:

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Mild fever

- Coughing
- Reduced appetite

Most healthy cats can recover from this type of illness in a week to 10 days without medical intervention. That said, if they refuse to eat for more than 48 hours, schedule a vet visit as soon as possible.

2) Vaccination

Has your cat had a vaccination recently? This could be the reason they're not eating.

Some routine vaccinations have side effects, and loss of appetite is among one of the most common. This condition is usually temporary and mild, but if it persists for more than 48 hours, talk to your vet.

3) Unfamiliar Surroundings

Travel — and the unfamiliar surroundings that come with it — is another common reason your cat won't eat.

When your cat is at home, they've got everything figured out. But when they travel, they have to learn the ins and outs of a whole new environment (including things like threats, hiding places, where to get food and water, etc.).

That can be stressful and cause them to lose their appetite for a time.

In addition, some cats may develop motion sickness when traveling by car or plane, and the nausea that accompanies it can result in your cat not eating until the upset tummy goes away.

4) Changes in Routine

Cats are creatures of habit and love their routine — and, honestly, who can blame them? If their routine is disrupted for some reason, they may not feel like eating.

For example, if you board them in a kitty hotel while you're on vacation, they may lose their appetite for a while until they settle into a new routine.

Even something as seemingly simple as moving their food and water bowl from the place they're used to can throw them for a loop and take away their desire to eat for a while.



5) Stress or Anxiety

In many cases, your cat may not feel like eating because they're stressed or anxious. This goes back to changes in their routine or environment and may include things such as:

- New people in the house
- New pets in the house
- The absence of a person who's normally there
- The absence of a pet that's normally there
- New furniture

- Construction
- Excessive noise

Even dirty food dishes or the fact that their food dish is too close to their litter box can cause stress and anxiety in a sensitive cat that results in a loss of appetite.

6) Changes in Their Metabolism

As your cat gets older, their metabolism — the rate at which their body converts food into energy — often goes down. Sometimes, this can happen so suddenly that your older cat is eating normally one day and skipping a meal or two the next.

This may be a signal that it's time to switch from an adult diet to a senior diet (including the type of food they eat, the amount, and the frequency of meals).

7) Dental Issues

Dental issues can make chewing and eating painful for your cat, so they may skip meals if something in their mouth hurts.

Possible issues include:

- Tooth pain
- Inflamed gums
- Abscess

- Broken tooth
- Oral tumors

If you suspect that your cat is suffering from dental problems, take them to the vet as soon as possible.

8) Pain

If your cat has hurt itself or is suffering from pain anywhere in their body, they may choose not to eat for a while until the pain subsides (or they get used to it).

It's very much like when you're in a lot of pain. Your body dedicates all its resources to making you better, so you might lose your appetite. The same type of response is occurring in your cat's body.

That said, if they don't return to a normal eating schedule in a day or two, take them to the vet to get them checked out.



What to Do When Your Cat Won't Eat

Talk to Your Vet

The best thing you can do when your cat won't eat — or anytime you suspect something might be wrong — is talk to your vet.

They can rule out the common reasons for loss of appetite — like illness, dental issues, and pain — as well as other, more serious medical problems.

That way, you don't have to worry about your kitty's condition getting worse and can focus on alleviating their stress or helping them deal with changes in their routine.

Monitor Your Cat's Behavior

What starts as a loss of appetite can escalate to something more serious, so it's important to monitor your cat's behavior for a few days.

If they show any other signs of illness such as lethargy, vomiting, or diarrhea, take them to the vet right away.

Try Different Food

The fact that your cat won't eat may come down to nothing more than being bored with their food. After all, cats have sophisticated palates.

Try offering them a different flavor or type of food to see if that helps. This may mean switching from one dry food to another. But it may also mean switching from dry cat food to wet cat food.

For example, if they've been eating dry cat food for a while, switch to a wet cat food, like [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ \(open in new tab\)](#).

The soft texture, added gravy, and delicious flavors - [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Beef\(open in new tab\)](#), [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Chicken\(open in new tab\)](#), [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Salmon\(open in new tab\)](#), and [White SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ White Fish\(open in new tab\)](#) - can entice your feline friend to eat again (and continue to eat in the days to come). SHEBA® cat food is a gourmet meal your fancy feline is sure to love!

Place Their Food Dish in a Quiet Area

Feeding your cat in the kitchen during the morning rush may be too much for them to handle. They'll naturally skip eating in order to avoid all the activity going on as everyone tries to get out the door on time.

Instead, let them eat in peace by placing their food dish in a quiet area away from all the chaos and crazy.

Clean Their Food and Water Bowls

Over time, bacteria will grow on the surface of your cat's food and water bowls. Too much bacterial buildup and your cat won't want to eat.

To prevent this from happening, wash both their food and water bowl every few days.

Pour Water from a Tuna Can Over Their Food

Another way you can entice your cat to eat when they've lost their appetite is to pour water from a tuna can over their dry food. Not only does this transform dry food into wet food (of sorts), but it also adds a new flavor to their diet.

Or, if you want to really motivate them to eat, try mixing their dry food with any variety of [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ \(open in new tab\)](#) or [SHEBA PERFECT PORTIONS™ \(open in new tab\)](#) wet cat food.



Give Your Cat the Food They Crave

A great way to provide a bit of motivation when your cat won't eat is to entice them with the food they crave. SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ and PERFECT PORTIONS™ are the perfect solution!

[GRAVY INDULGENCE™ \(open in new tab\)](#) is made with extra gravy and added moisture and flavor that even the most discerning cats will enjoy. It's available in four delicious flavors:

- [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Beef\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Chicken\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ Salmon\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® GRAVY INDULGENCE™ White Fish\(open in new tab\)](#)

PERFECT PORTIONS™ has an even larger variety of textures and flavors that your cat is sure to love.

PERFECT PORTIONS™ BISTRO includes:

- SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ [Bistro Chicken in Alfredo Sauce](#) Entrée
- SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ [Bistro Salmon in Creamy Sauce](#) Entrée

PERFECT PORTIONS™ PREMIUM PATE includes:

- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Premium Paté Gourmet Chicken & Tuna Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)

- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Premium Paté Roasted Chicken & Liver Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Premium Paté Roasted Turkey Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Premium Paté Savory Chicken Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Premium Paté Signature Seafood Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)

PERFECT PORTIONS™ CUTS IN GRAVY includes:

- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Delicate Whitefish and Tuna Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Roasted Chicken Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Savory Mixed Grill Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Sustainable Tuna Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)
- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Tender Trout Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)

- [SHEBA® PERFECT PORTIONS™ Cuts in Gravy Tender Turkey Entrée\(open in new tab\)](#)

And all SHEBA® wet cat foods are more than just delicious — they're also nutritious! Our recipes are crafted with essential vitamins and minerals to help support your cat's overall health.

So, if your cat won't eat, try giving them what they want to eat: SHEBA® cat food!

```
.layout-container .main { background: #1A1A18 !important; } .article-header-block { margin-bottom: 0rem !important; } .results-key-header-container { margin-top: 8rem; }
```

More Articles Like This



[12 Ways to Celebrate Your Cat's Birthday or Gotcha Day](#)

Cat parents don't hesitate to celebrate their divine feline, whether it's a special occasion or not. However, few reasons are more purr-fect for partying than birthdays and gotcha days (e.g., their adoption day, first day home with you, day they were found as a stray, etc.).

[EXPLORE](#)



[9 Weird Eating Habits In Cats — And What To Do About Them](#)

Every person with a cat has experienced this moment: Your cat lets you know it's time to eat, and they stroll to their typical dining spot and wait to be served. You happily oblige, yet you're a bit nervous as you anxiously watch your cat, hoping for their approval.

[EXPLORE](#)



[A Guide To The Premium Ingredients In Sheba® Cat Food](#)

It goes without saying that your cat wants only the best ingredients in their wet food in juuuuust the right amounts. Delicious. Nutritious. More, please. Cats can't read labels, but you can. Let's peruse the main ingredients we've stocked in the SHEBA® brand pantry — and learn why you should offer them to your cat.

[EXPLORE](#)



[Kitten Training: 20 Tips for Training Your New Cat](#)

Congratulations on your new kitten! Bringing a furry friend into your home is an exciting

and joyous experience. But along with all the fun and cuddles comes the responsibility of kitten training. This guide shares 20 tips for kitten training to help your new pet grow into a well-behaved and happy feline. But before we dive into those tips, let's answer a burning question.

[EXPLORE](#)

Source URL: <https://www.sheba.com/lifestyle/cat-wont-eat>