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Eating Habits

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. They sniff the bowl, perhaps take a nibble. And then, if you've chosen well, your cat begins to eat and you exhale in relief — no snub today at your cat café.

1. Munching on plants

Eating greenery is pretty common and perfectly normal. It's thought that wild cat species feed on grass to aid in digestion; domestic cats satisfy this drive by nibbling the houseplants. There's no reason to prune back this behavior, but take care that only cat-safe plants are within reach since many houseplants are toxic to pets.

2. Playing with their food

If your cat is swatting their food across the floor, it's not because they've seen cranky toddlers doing the same to their vegetables. Cats are hunters by nature — they expect mealtime to include a chase. So, pawing at their food isn't a critique of the chef's efforts. In fact, this is healthy activity for your cat: good for nurturing their instincts and burning calories.

3. Gorging

We don't typically think of cats as gorgers — dogs are the ones "wolfing" down their food, right? If your cat chows down like the buffet is closing, it could be a competitive response to other pets in your home. Or if you've warmed up wet food for them, your cat might be trying to finish it before it cools. To counter the gorging, try feeding smaller amounts several times a day instead of two larger meals twice a day. Or consider purchasing a food dish or mat designed to slow down eating and encourage your cat's foraging behavior.

4. Refusing to eat alone

When eating, it's not unusual for cats to seek solitude in a comfortable place where they feel safe from other predators looking to steal a meal — or worse, turn them into a meal. On the other end of the spectrum are cats that will only eat when you keep them company. If you leave the room, they might stop eating, follow you out and even complain vocally. Sometimes called "affection eating," this behavior could be a reaction to the stress of a different environment and/or new people. Extra bonding time and activities can gradually reduce their stress and encourage independent eating.

Header 1

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Textblock

Cats can be rather discerning eaters. In one sense, that means they like what they like ... and tomorrow, for no apparent reason, they might not like it anymore. Or they might still like the same food but adopt a new mealtime habit. Let's explore some of the most common strange eating behaviors cats engage in and find out which ones are concerning

and which are just plain curious.

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