

Bland Diet For Cats With Vomiting and Diarrhea

 cat-world.com.au/bland-diet-for-sick-cats.html

The purpose of putting a cat on a bland diet is to allow the decrease of peristalsis, the contraction of the smooth muscles of the gastrointestinal tract, and allow it to rest and heal before introducing more difficult to digest foods. Your veterinarian may recommend a cat be put on a bland diet after a recent bout of sickness affecting his gastrointestinal tract, has a medical condition which causes nausea, or needs an easily digestible food.

The amount of time your cat will be on this diet depends on the underlying cause.

A cat suffering from acute vomiting and diarrhea may fast for 12-24 hours. Water will still be available during this period; however, as cats who have experienced vomiting or diarrhea are often dehydrated, it may be necessary to replace lost fluids and electrolytes via drip or oral rehydration solution.

What medical conditions may require a bland diet?

Most conditions in which the gastrointestinal tract is affected and needs a rest, such as vomiting and diarrhea. Other indications include:

- Post surgery
- Pancreatitis
- During chemotherapy
- Gastric ulcers
- Reflux

What is a bland diet?

There are several recommendations for bland diets, but the main goal is soft, easily digestible, low in fat and fibre, be made up of one type of protein. The purpose of a bland diet is to ensure continued nutrition while giving your cat's gastrointestinal tract a chance to rest and heal.

Most of these recipes consist of a protein source and a carbohydrate. The ratio should be one part protein to two parts carb.

Bland diets may consist of:

- Poached or steamed chicken breast alone.
- Poached or steamed chicken or turkey mince with or without white rice.
- Low fat cottage cheese and cooked white rice.
- Poached or steamed chicken breast with cooked white rice.

How to prepare a bland diet

Ingredients:

(poached chicken and rice)

- 1 chicken breast (no skin or bones)
- 1/2 cup white rice

Method:

- Chop chicken breast into chunks and add enough water to cover
- In a separate pan, cook rice as per instructions on the pack
- Bring the water or low salt stock to boiling point, reduce the heat and simmer the chicken until cooked through (approximately 5-10 minutes)
- Place chicken in a clean bowl with a small amount of the water, once it is cool enough, shred the chicken with two forks
- Add rice to chicken at a ratio of 2 parts rice/1 part chicken, mix well
- Cover and refrigerate until ready to use

Feed small quantities more often – three to four times is ideal. Large meals can upset the already delicate gastrointestinal tract.

Other treatment suggestions

Pumpkin is high in fibre; however, this is soluble fibre, meaning that it absorbs water from the digestive tract, slowing down digestion and decreasing peristalsis, which can be of benefit to cats with diarrhea.

It also contains potassium which cats lose when they have had a bout of vomiting or diarrhea. Poach or steam 1 cup of pumpkin, drain, and mash.

Slippery elm contains a mucilage (a gelatinous substance) which coats and soothes the intestinal tract. It also stimulates the production of mucus, which can protect the gastrointestinal tract and stomach. Add 1 teaspoon per 2 kg (10 lbs) body weight to your cat's food.

Probiotics can help to replace helpful bacteria which may have been lost.

When re-introducing your cat's normal diet, do so slowly, over several days. Mix a small amount of the old diet in with the current bland diet, gradually increasing the old diet and decreasing the new.

Several commercial varieties of food are available to cats on a bland diet. These include Science Diet I/D (intestinal diet), Royal Canin Intestinal HE (high energy). These come in dry or canned; it is usually better to feed the canned to replace fluids lost during sickness.

No other food sources or treats should be given to your cat while he is on a bland diet with the exception of probiotics, which some veterinarians will recommend to help with gut bacteria. Always check with your veterinarian before giving anything to your cat while he is on a bland diet.

What not to do

- Do not leave dry food out for cats on a bland diet unless it is designed to be fed to cats during this period (wet food is better).
- Do not fry or season food. The best way to cook is poaching or steaming.
- Buy the leanest cuts of meat possible.

How long will my cat need to be on a bland diet?

Most cats will be on this diet until stools return to normal, which usually takes a few days. This diet serves the purpose of resting the GI tract, but it is not completely balanced and should not be given for an extended period.

My cat won't eat the food

- Some cats can be fussy to dietary changes, when feeding offering a bland diet to a cat try giving it to him warmed up if possible, as this is more appetising than cold food.
- Try a different type of food.
- Baby food is another alternative. Make sure it doesn't contain onion or garlic which are both toxic to cats.
- If you have tried the above and your cat is still refusing to eat, see a veterinarian. A cat going without food can quickly develop hepatic lipidosis where the body breaks down fat to use as fuel. The liver is not very efficient at breaking down fat and can become overwhelmed. Hepatic lipidosis is a serious and life-threatening condition.