

# Differences BETWEEN Dogs & Cats

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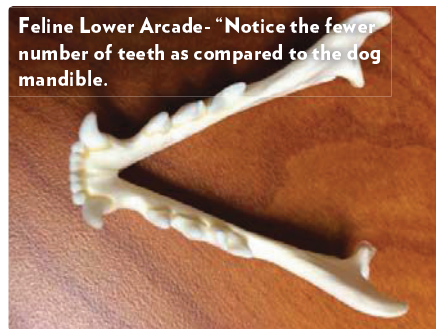
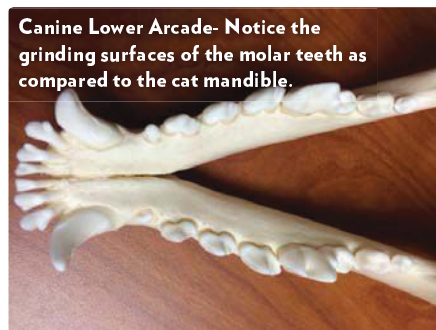
Dogs and cats are different for obvious reasons. Cats are solitary animals, while dogs in the wild form packs. They hunt and defend themselves differently and have different nutritional needs.

Cats are true carnivores, meaning they need a lot of protein and less dietary carbohydrates. While some quantity of carbohydrates is safe for cats, in general, their digestive tracts are less able to digest and absorb carbohydrates than the gastrointestinal tracts of dogs. Instead of using glucose for energy like humans do, their bodies are more equipped to use protein. Dogs, on the other hand, are more omnivorous than cats and can tolerate higher levels of dietary carbohydrates.

There are other nutritional differences as well. Cats need dietary taurine, which is an amino acid that is essential for cardiac function, vision, and digestive function. Dogs are able to make taurine from another amino acid, so we rarely worry about dietary taurine for dogs. Cats also need arachidonic acid (a fatty acid) and retinol (a specific form of vitamin A) in their diets because their bodies are not equipped with the same enzymes that dogs and humans use to make these important nutrients. These nutrients are found in animal tissue, which is another reason we consider cats to be true carnivores.

Cats hunt differently than dogs. They can jump and climb, giving them more options when they need to hunt for food, or when they feel threatened. Cats creep up on their

prey and catch it by surprise, so their body conformation is that of a sprinter. Dogs are earthbound, so they need their pack to hunt effectively. When threatened, they are more likely to react with aggression because their ability to flee from a predator is limited. In the wild, dogs capture their prey by running



it down. Their body conformation is that of a long distance runner.

Despite the fact that cats are carnivores, an all-meat diet is not safe for any animal. Meat is not a complete and balanced source of nutrition due to vitamin and mineral excesses and deficiencies. Feeding your companion a commercial pet food or having a homemade diet specifically formulated for their dietary needs is the best way to ensure that your pet receives proper nutrition.

Another difference between dogs and cats is their ability to tolerate a lack of food. Cats cannot be fasted and should not be placed on a strict diet too quickly. Unfortunately, they don't efficiently burn fat reserves to use as an energy source. Instead, without food, their bodies break down non-fatty tissues for energy. This can lead to a life-threatening liver condition called hepatic lipidosis. Dogs are much better at using their fat reserves and can tolerate a lack of food for much longer than cats. In the wild, dogs can resort to eating a plant-based diet in order to survive if needed. Cats and dogs not only handle their food differently, but also tolerate medications differently. Never assume that what you give your dog is safe for your cat.

Dogs and cats also have different dentition. Dogs have 42 teeth while cats have 30. In both species, the canine teeth are used for puncturing and gripping. The incisors are for nipping small pieces of meat. The carnassial teeth are like scissors and knives. Dogs and cats use them to shear flesh away from bones. Dogs' molar teeth have flat grinding surfaces to help them grind through flesh and bone. None of the cat's teeth, including their molars, have grinding surfaces.

Both species have claws that are used to catch and hold prey, and can also be used for digging, self-defense, climbing trees and grooming. Cats have retractable claws. This allows them to keep their claws sharp, whereas dogs are constantly wearing theirs down.

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