



Adherence to a strict feeding schedule is strongly recommended. Scheduled feedings will result in the animals consuming the meal more quickly, decreasing the time for potential spoilage. Meals should be of proper proportions, to facilitate consumption before they spoil or become contaminated. If spoilage does not require earlier removal, food not consumed within 12 hours must be removed and disposed of properly. Stored meat must be refrigerated, or wrapped and frozen. Frozen meats must be handled appropriately to prevent contamination; i.e., thawed under refrigeration. Bakery products are not to be fed since felids do not have the enzymes necessary to digest food with a high carbohydrate content. Outdated meats from grocery stores may be fed if kept refrigerated or frozen until used. If fish are provided as a part of the diet, appropriate vitamin E and thiamine supplementation is required to compensate for thiaminase and high polyunsaturated fatty acid content.

In order to mimic natural feeding behaviors and when approved by the attending veterinarian, animals may be fasted for 1 or 2 nonconsecutive days per week. During fasting, long femur bones, oxtails, horsetails, or rawhides should be fed in order to promote periodontal health and provide an opportunity for the animals to engage in more natural feeding behaviors. This is a good practice even when the animals are not fasted.

If young felids are not kept with the dam until weaned, a balanced formula and an appropriate feeding schedule should be approved in writing by the attending veterinarian.



