



Hairballs

By Royal Canin Scientific Communications

Indoor cats may spend up to 30% of their time grooming. As a result, cats ingest hair that may form into “hairballs” in the gastrointestinal tract. In many cases these hairballs are regurgitated, but sometimes they lead to digestive problems or obstruction.

What can we do to reduce the occurrence of hairballs? Frequent grooming helps dislodge hairs at the end of their life cycle and removes them. Cats’ peak shedding occurs in the summer, and so more hair is likely to be ingested then. By brushing out some of the hairs, we lower the amount the cat ingests to form hairballs.

Nutritionally, it is important to provide an adequate amount of fiber to stimulate intestinal transit. Fiber helps the hair move through the GI tract and out of the body. A blend of both soluble and insoluble fibers is optimum for hairball prevention. A mucilage such as psyllium acts with both fiber types to aid in natural purging of the hairballs.

Both proper grooming and focused nutrition have complimentary effects in the prevention of hairballs in cats. With timely trips to the groomer and by feeding a diet with the proper amount of fiber, we can reduce hairball problems.