

RED TUNA FOR CATS

Q: Since it is known that oils in red tuna prevent absorption of vitamin E, with the result that cats develop steatitis—even though vitamin E has been added to these products in the past—what has changed so that red tuna is now a safe food for cats?—R, New Jersey.

A: Tuna oils contain highly unsaturated fatty acids which in the process of becoming rancid oxidize or destroy vitamin E unless a more efficient antioxidant is present. Once the oils are rancid they are not conducive to the destruction of vitamin E; it is only during the process of becoming rancid that oxidation of the vitamin E occurs. Now stabilized tuna can be fed to cats with safety. Both vitamin E and other highly efficient antioxidants are added to tuna to help prevent the development of rancidity. The added vitamin E also helps ensure that ample quantities of vitamin E are available to meet the nutritional requirements of cats.—James E. Corbin, PhD, Ralston Purina Co., St. Louis.