

## What Catnip is Made of and Why it Can Make Your Cat Seem “High”

If you have ever owned a cat, then you have probably tried to see how crazy your feline would go over catnip. Rolling around, flipping over, and being generally hyperactive. But what exactly is in it that makes cats go bonkers?

Catnip, or *Nepeta cataria*, is a perennial herb found in the mint family labiatae and can grow about 3 feet high.

The active chemical compound ingredient that attracts and effects your cat is nepetalactone, which alters the behavior of not just domestic cats, but big cats, like lions and tigers, as well. The chemical can be found in the plant's leaves and stems, which is why you can find cats gnawing on the plant to release more nepetalactone.

Nepetalactone triggers a sense of euphoria in the brain of the susceptible cat, which produces the “high” that is sometimes described similar to either [marijuana](#) or LSD. Your cat can feel the effects for about 10 minutes before wearing off.

The peculiar thing about catnip is that when it is eaten, it acts as a sedative, but when smelled, it produces an entirely opposite reaction for cats. Many researchers believe it is mimicking feline pheromones and is triggering those receptors.

However, not all cats feel the effects of catnip. About 50 percent of cats seem to be affected and the behavioral reactions of catnip vary between individuals. It is even believed that sensitivity, or lack thereof, to catnip can be inherited.

Catnip isn't just for cats either. *Nepeta cataria* is also known to help humans and has been used for its sedative properties for centuries. It has similar properties to chamomile and is also a very potent mosquito repellent.

Luckily, cats cannot overdose on catnip, but that doesn't mean you don't want to know if what your cat is rolling around in is safe for them.

Phenomenex has all the tools necessary for laboratories to test substances in your [pet's nip, toys, and food](#). We even recently conducted an application to determine the amount of vitamin D2/D3 and pre-D2/D3 in pet food using LC-MS/MS.

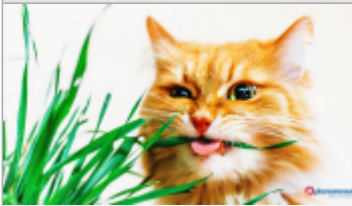
Find the full technical application here: [Determination of Vitamin D2/D3 and Pre-D2/D3 in Pet Food by LC-MS/MS](#)

Are you running applications on catnip? Reach out to our technical experts nearly [24/7 through Live Chat](#) to ask any pressing questions or discover the best tools for the job.

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## Summary



### Article Name

What Catnip is Made of and Why it Can Make Your Cat Seem "High"

### Description

If you have ever owned a cat, you know how crazy they can go for catnip. Explore the chemical compounds that go into why cats go bonkers for catnip.