

Basic medical exam and deworming

Before welcoming a kitten in your home, it is highly recommended to get him examined by a veterinarian to make sure he is in good health and check if he houses parasites like fleas, ear mites and intestinal worms. He can received treatment against parasites starting at 3 weeks old. Your cat can contract these parasites through his mother. It is recommended to do a stool analysis to target the treatment against the present worms.

Your cat's behaviour

Indoor cat or outdoor cat?

A cat that goes outside will live a free life, hunt, make friends, exercise more, take more sun but will also be exposed the viruses like leukemia, cat aids, rabies. Parasites like fleas, intestinal worms, street gang fights, car accidents, a malicious neighbour that shoots lead or food intoxication. An indoor cat has less interaction, less exercise, will watch flies and birds through windows but is less likely to be sick, will live longer than an outdoor cat.

An indoor cat needs to be mentally stimulated, not only as a kitten, he needs a scratching post if he is not declawed, playing with him, throwing an aluminum ball, a string like a shoe lace. He should be brushed regularly.

Vaccination:

After 9 weeks, the kitten does not have any maternal antibodies left. Whether your cat will stay in the house or be an outdoor cat, it is very important to protect him from the most widespread, contagious and serious diseases. Amongst those, you will find panleukopenia, feline infectious rhinotracheitis, feline calicivirus, feline leukemia, feline aids and rabies. The veterinarian will adapt the vaccination protocol so it suits your cat the best.

The vaccine is done around 8 weeks and 3-4 weeks later. Then a year later and most vaccines can be given every 3 years after that.

1

Feline infectious rhinotracheitis: Indoor and outdoor cat

It is an upper respiratory tract disease, easily transmittable from a cat to another. The signs of this disease are a moderate fever, loss of appetite, sneezing, nasal and eye discharge, corneal ulcer and coughing. Only a supportive treatment can be administered because no treatment exists. Cats can heal from this disease but stay carriers their whole life.

2

Feline calicivirosis: Indoor and outdoor cats

Calicivirosis is an important upper respiratory tract disease in cats. Extremely contagious, it manifests with fever, ulcers and pustules developing on the tongue and pneumonia. According to the virus strain in cause, it can be benign or serious. There is no treatment, the veterinarian will give a supportive treatment only and cats can heal or can sneeze and have teary eyes chronically and continue to be contagious.

3

Feline panleukopenia: indoor and outdoor cat

Is caused by a very resistant virus and can survive outside of the cat's organism for one year! Most cats will be exposed at a moment or another and the percentage of non-vaccinated cats that contract the disease is 90-100%. Signs of the disease are weariness, diarrhea, vomiting, serious dehydration and fever. Gladly, there is a very effective vaccine to prevent the disease because it is very hard to treat. Even when a sick cat has recovered, he can transmit the disease to other non-vaccinated animals during a couple of weeks.

Rabies: Outdoor cats

This fatal viral disease touches the central nervous system. It constitutes a danger to most mammals including humans. It spreads by infected animal saliva, either with a bite or contact with a skin lesion (skunks, foxes, racoons and bats are often carriers of the disease). Rabies vaccination will allow your cat to resist this virus, should he be exposed. However, you must know that there is no way to heal an animal that has rabies. It is why many municipalities require that cats be vaccinated regularly against this disease. In fact, if you must travel with your cat here or outside the country, we would very certainly ask you to show a proof of vaccination.

Feline leukemia(FeLV): Outdoor cat or multi-cat

This infection is caused by the feline leukemia (FeLV) virus, it is a disease with multiple faces and it can cause any possible symptoms. At the beginning of the infection, the cat can show transient fever, that show no signs for months or even years until it decides to attack. In fact, it is the number one death cause for cats in North America. Once he has been exposed to the virus, the cat continues to infects his kind; mainly through saliva. A detection test exists for this virus.

Feline aids: Outdoor cat or multi-cat

It is caused by a virus that leads to immunodeficiency. It is a very contagious disease between cats, gladly; the virus is not transmittable to humans. The signs of disease can go unseen at the beginning of the infection then it can manifest with vague signs like fever, loss of appetite, gum or other organ infection, hypertrophied glands, etc.

What age is your cat ?



If your cat is...	In human age he is...
1 month	5 to 6 months
2 months	9 to 10 months
3 months	2 to 3 years
4 months	5 to 6 years
5 months	8 to 9 years
6 months	14 years
7 months	15 years
8 months	16 years
1 year	18 years
2 years	25 years
3 years	30 years
4 years	35 years
5 years	38 to 40 years
6 years	42 to 44 years
7 years	45 years
8 years	48 years
9 years	55 years
10 years	60 years
11 years	62 years
12 years	65 years
13 years	68 years
14 years	72 years
15 years	74 years
16 years	76 years
17 years	78 years

Your cat's food

Give a balanced diet and unlimited water. Cats have specific needs like taurine that is an amino acid essential for vision and the prevention of cardiac problems. A balanced food is worth it medium and long term wise because a well fed cat is less likely to get infection and other health problems.

You could give him the quantity he needs for 24h or only one meal or better divide it in two meals. Kitten must not drink milk except before weaning if the mother is absent.

Your cat's diseases

Not eating: A cat that doesn't eat during a whole day can either be due to stress, pain or a disease. Be sure your cat hasn't lived a stress (Example: Receiving guests that disturbed his habits? A change in his diet? Exposition to new sounds? His bowl is not at its usual place?) The cat can take many hours to regain his calm. You have to present canned food or tuna mixed to his dry food to him. If he eats with appetite, check his mouth. He may have a dental disease that keeps him from chewing kibble. If he does not want canned food and does not have any other symptoms, you can wait the following day. If he is not eating for two days or more, get your cat examined by a veterinarian, because the causes are varied and only a veterinarian will be able to diagnose them.

Vomiting: Vomiting is a reflex act. If the cat has something that is disturbing his stomach, he will vomit it; for example, hairballs, spoiled food, etc. You have to distinguish a digestive vomiting and an extradiigestive vomiting.

Digestive gastritis due to: Food indigestion? Hairball? Food intolerance? Immune gastric disease? Foreign body? Gastric ulcer? Gastric tumor?

Extra digestive: Pancreatitis, hepatitis, renal insufficiency? Hepatic insufficiency? Viral disease (Infectious feline peritonitis, feline panleukopenia, leukemia, feline aids)? Diabetes? Hyperthyroidism?

Vomiting blood: Gastric ulcer? Foreign body? A tumor, hepatic insufficiency? Rodenticides intoxication? Every type of gastritis can lead to vomiting blood.

When should I worry?

Vomiting is never normal, but it can be transient; for example: vomiting hairballs or food indigestion. If it becomes frequent, start questioning yourself about the origin of the vomiting before it becomes a serious problem.

Food is the first cause to incriminate when vomiting is recurrent. Then comes all the other disease causes.

For occasional vomiting, you can discuss it during your cat's annual exam. However, if the vomiting is frequent or cause appetite loss, you need to consult your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Eye discharge: A cat that is not feeling well will let himself go, will not clean himself, dehydration, conjunctivitis due to dust, bacteria, a virus can be in cause. Clean eyes with a sterile solution, if discharge does not disappear after two or three days, have your cat examined by a veterinarian.

Sneezing and nasal discharge: A rhinitis due to a foreign object in the nose, a feline rhinotracheitis, a tumor... These are the mains causes for sneezing in nasal discharge.

Soft stool or diarrhea: Always think that it can be a digestive or an extra digestive cause. Fast your cat for 12 hours and start feeding again in small quantity could solve the problem.

If the diarrhea is due to a food change, return to the old diet. If you gave a new treat, store the bag. If diarrhea continues and you cat is eating well, you can try to buy a diet designed to dry stools at your veterinarian. It is always better to have your cat examined before it becomes chronic.

Blood in stool: A diarrhea with intestine inflammation. Some parasites like coccidia, a foreign object, a tumor, a rodenticides intoxication, ulcers, these are the main causes. If blood disappears with the diarrhea, there is no reason to worry. However, have your cat examined if the blood persists.

Not passing stool: The most common cause is a "lazy colon" problem and it will become bigger and lose its contraction power which will lead to your cat forcing like he wants to urinate, but nothing comes out. A foreign object or a tumor can also cause this.

Urinating everywhere: Behaviour or medical?

A non-neutered cat or a female in heat, a cat that has access to a window or overpopulation of cats in the house... At adult age, 10% of neutered males and 5% of spayed females will spray their territory frequently.

Litter box: Too far, not discrete enough, placed in a noisy place, covered litter.

Litter: Not clean enough, perfumed, unpleasant texture to the touch.

Medical: bladder infection or inflammation, with or without crystals and calculus, urethra inflammation. If your cat drinks a lot, he will urinate a lot and may not be clean (diabetes, renal insufficiency, etc.). The veterinarian should examine your cat to find the causes for uncleanliness and suggest a solution.

Sleeping a lot: By nature, a cat lies down and sleeps a lot but does not show indifference to his environment. It asks for food, treats, to go outside, to be petted, he interacts with you. If he does nothing like that, he may have pain somewhere, be very uncomfortable or be weary because of a disease.

Limping: Cats are agile and very good at calculating distances, but sometimes they make calculation mistakes and it can cost them a lot. Others are more impulsive: following a fly to the point of gliding from a balcony. Bites from another cat can cause pain with sometimes abscess and limping.

Skin wound: Laceration following an accident or a cat bite, or even automutilation following excessive scratching that can be due to skin parasites, food or environment allergies, immune skin disease, diet deficient in essential fatty acids.

Losing weight: Chronic vomiting and diarrhea, eating little or not at all following a dental disease, infection by a virus or other, or hyperthyroidism (thyroid gland), diabetes, kidney insufficiency, tumors. These are the causes the veterinarian will look into.

Drinking a lot: Diabetes, kidney insufficiency, hepatic insufficiency, and some tumors can lead to exaggerated thirst and a litter box full of urine

Shedding: Moulting, diet deficient in fatty acids, omega 3, vitamins and micronutrients, parasites like fleas.

Itching, licking and grooming himself a lot: The possible causes are: deficiencies cited for weight loss and also other diseases like allergies (food, seasonal and environmental). Parasite infestation (fleas, demodex, cheyletiellosis, lice and mange). A thorough veterinary exam and lab test are necessary to find the causes.

Bad smell from the mouth: Plaque, tartar and bacteria accumulation, dental abscess, ulcers on the tongue and prolonged fasting. In absence of appropriate dental care, it is estimated that by the age of 3, 80% of cats will show signs of oral disease. Prevention consists in a healthy diet, chew treats, regular teeth brushing at home and an annual dental exam at the veterinarian.

Shakes and scratches ears: The veterinarian will look for an external or medium otitis caused by bacteria or fungus or caused by parasites like ear mites; common parasites that are extremely contagious and often transmit from an animal to another.

Ear pavilion hematoma: Blood accumulated in your cat's ear pavilion. When a cat shakes his head vigorously, scratches or gets hit on or around the ear it can cause lesions to the blood vessels. An infection or the presence of ear mites or debris in the ear is often the cause for this kind of behaviour.

Behaviour change, more aggressive: A cat that is in pain can become irritable, the thyroid gland disease (feline hyperthyroidism), stress and anxiety can transform a cat "into a tiger".

Plant intoxication: Many plants are toxic when ingested. You can refer to the following website: www.aspca.org

Drug intoxication

Acetaminophen, (Toxic dose: cat: 50 mg/kg. Aspirin, anti-fleas products containing pyrethrins like zodiac, anti-parasites)

Aging cat

Obesity Older cats being less active, it is very important to correct their diet to reduce the calorie intake. Weight control will prevent tension exerted on joints and reduce risks of cardiac insufficiency, kidney or liver disease, digestive problems and even more. You also have to increase the fiber, fatty acids and vitamin intake and reduce sodium, protein and fat in his diet.

Arthritis manifests in some animals with a mild stiffness in other they will become lazy and sleep 28 hours a day. Arthritic pain can be relieved with anti-inflammatories and some diets exist that will make them feel lighter and move more.

Teeth loss: It is hard to have a cat accept teeth brushing, so there are diet and treats that are approved for the prevention of dental plaque accumulation and by the same occasion provide a better oral health for your cat.

Mammal tumors happen especially in females that are not spayed.

Skin and hair problems: With age, the skin loses its elasticity which makes your companion more vulnerable to injuries. The hair gets thinner and duller. Grooming more frequently and administration on fatty acid supplements can be extremely beneficial.

Deafness: Deafness is generally an old animal problem. It can however happen following a trauma, an exposition to intense noise or an infection and it may be hereditary or congenital. Unfortunately, once deafness is diagnosed in your cat it is too late to do anything.

Cognitive dysfunction manifests with confusion, disorientation or a diminution of activity. Meows can happen at any time of the day or night. Medication can help with some problems.