

CHECKLIST FOR A HEALTHY INDOOR CAT

Think indoor cats don't have risk for medical problems? Think again! Most cats, even indoor ones, will eventually become ill or have medical issues. Here are some reasons to bring your cat in to see us:

Nutrition

All pet foods are not created equal! Good nutrition is essential to a healthy life. Many commercial cat foods provide substandard nutrition and can contribute to bladder disease, obesity, kidney disease and other problems. Let us help you find the diet that will benefit your cat the most.

Obesity

Being overweight is very common, especially in indoor cats that don't get as much exercise. We can help design a weight control program that will add 2-3 years to your cat's life expectancy.

Arthritis

90% of cats over age twelve have arthritis and 20-30% of them are painful. The older the cat, the more likely we can help to improve his or her quality of life by treating for chronic pain.

We had a client who came in recently to put his cat to sleep. She had been losing weight for 6 months. Even though we had been seeing his dogs frequently, we had never seen his cat. By the time he finally brought her in she was so thin and dehydrated that I didn't think we could bring her back and we carried out the euthanasia. The heartbreaking part is that this owner loved his cat. It just had never occurred to him that maybe she wasn't just "getting old." Maybe she had a medical problem that we could have addressed or solved – and in fact it's very likely that we could have fixed her if we had seen her earlier on. Unfortunately, this is a common scenario in veterinary hospitals, because people simply don't realize that cats benefit from regular health care. Don't wait until it's too late! Regular check ups can add years to your cat's life!

Dental disease

80% of cats over age four have dental disease. By age twelve most cats that have not received dental care have a mouth full of painful infected teeth and often cavities as well. Cats that receive dental care live two years longer, on average, than cats that don't get that care.

Vaccinations

Your home is not a sterile bubble! All cats need to be vaccinated to prevent infectious diseases that you can bring home to them on your hands, shoes or clothing, and to keep up their immunity against Rhinotracheitis. This upper respiratory disease is carried by 90% of cats and can cause illness when vaccine immunity declines with time.

Parasites

Most cats carry larval parasites in their bodies their entire lives. Intestinal parasites can flare up at any time during your cat's lifetime, causing vomiting, diarrhea,

weight loss and other symptoms. Stool samples should be checked annually for both indoor and outdoor cats.

Metabolic diseases

Weight loss in older cats is rarely due to "old age." Many common and treatable problems can cause weight loss, including dental disease, diabetes, kidney disease and thyroid conditions. We need to diagnose and treat the cause in order to keep an older cat healthy and comfortable as they get older. Examination and blood testing identifies most of these diseases.

Heart disease

15% of cats have heart disease, often a serious and even fatal disease called cardiomyopathy. Even young cats less than a year old can die from this disease. Older cats frequently develop heart murmurs which should prompt further diagnostic testing and treatment.

Blood pressure measurement

High blood pressure (hypertension) is common in cats as they get older, especially if they also have kidney or thyroid disorders. Just as in people, hypertension is painless but can lead to blindness, strokes and kidney damage.

Outdoor risks

Cats that go outdoors have additional risks, especially for contagious diseases and parasites such as fleas and ticks. Your indoor-outdoor cat should have a health program that addresses these extra risk factors.