

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR CAT IS IN PAIN



You are in the best position to look for subtle changes in behavior that indicate your pet may be in pain – but pain doesn't always look like what owners expect and animals are very good at hiding pain. We've listed common pain symptoms below. If your cat shows one or more of these behaviors, he/she may be hurting. Please note that we've put vocalization last on the list. **Making noise is the least common symptom** & is only seen when pain is very severe. By completing this assessment, you are helping us to identify possible painful conditions, even when signs are subtle. **Most importantly, your pet doesn't need to suffer. We have safe, easy to administer pain medication for almost every painful condition your cat may experience.**

The most common pain symptoms following dentistry and surgery are in **red**. We have carefully chosen the most appropriate pain medication and the duration of treatment based on the level of pain expected for the procedure your cat had. **Please administer all the medication as planned.** We don't want you to see any of the symptoms below – if we have managed the pain properly you should not see any of these!

The most common arthritis symptoms are in **blue**. Remember that stiffness means pain!

Change in daily habits:

- Withdraws from social interaction with family members or other animals**
- Decreased appetite**
- Sleeps more or less than previously; sleeps in an unusual position, not curled up; sleeps in abnormal locations that may be easier to get to (do not require jumping)**
- Changes in drinking habits
- Urines or defecates outside the litter box; has difficulty getting in or out of the litter box, unable to squat**
- Constipation (avoids defecation due to pain)**
- Won't groom or grooms less, looks unkempt**
- Licking, biting, or over-grooming an incision or a particular part of the body**

Change in activity level:

- Restless**
- Reluctant to move, or moves slowly or stiffly**
- Trembles or shakes**
- Limps**
- Less active; plays, hunts, or play-hunts less**
- Avoids jumping, or can't leap as high as previously**
- Avoids or has difficulty with stairs**
- Seeks more affection
- Hides**

Posture:

- Lays with front feet folded underneath ("meatloaf" kitty, often seen with severe abdominal pain)
- Avoids or has difficulty stretching**
- Reluctant to sharpen his/her claws or scratch**

Facial expression:

- Glazed, wide-eyed, or looks sleepy**
- Squints**
- Enlarged pupils** (but this is also seen from some pain medications)

Self-protection:

- Protects a part of the body**
- Doesn't put weight on a leg**
- Doesn't want to be held, picked up, or petted**

Aggression: These are signs of severe pain, especially in a previously friendly cat

- Acts out of character
- Growls, hisses, or bites
- Pins ears back
- Is aggressive to humans or other cats

Vocalization: These are signs of severe pain

- Meowing more than usual
- Purring can occasionally be seen with shock, dehydration &/or severe pain
- Hissing or growling
- Vocalizes differently; makes sounds that are not normal for him/her

Please list any other changes that are not listed above:
