



CATS ARE AMERICA'S #1 PET, BUT **TOO MANY AREN'T GETTING THE VETERINARY CARE THEY NEED**

The American Association of Feline Practitioners and American Animal Hospital Association recommend a **minimum of one annual wellness exam for cats, with more frequent exams for senior patients, or those with medical or behavioral conditions.** Cats are no more or less healthy than dogs and require annual wellness exams just like dogs do. Regular examinations by a veterinarian are the best way to ensure your cat's health, especially since cats are very adept at hiding symptoms of poor health.

What You Can Expect During Your Health Risk Assessment

- ❖ A review of your cat's previous health records, including any medications/preventive your cat is currently taking
- ❖ Ask about any lifestyle changes in your cat
- ❖ Perform a thorough physical exam including: weight, teeth, mouth, eyes, ears, heart, lungs, abdomen, coat, and paws
- ❖ Ask about any unusual behavior in your cat, such as drinking more water, eating less or more, or a change in activity level
- ❖ A dental check to see if periodontal or endodontic disease treatment is necessary
- ❖ A recommendation of appropriate vaccinations to help prevent disease

Lifestyle Risk Assessment Questions Commonly Asked During Wellness Examinations

Do you have several cats & do any of them go outdoors, visit a boarding facility, go to the groomer or attend cat shows with you?

Your outdoor cats can bring disease agents inside and expose your indoor cats and are at high risk for infectious feline diseases, fleas, ticks, internal parasites, trauma from accidents and encounters with wildlife. Also, all of these activities increase the potential for close contact with other cats, so your cats should be appropriately vaccinated.

Has your cat shown signs of aggression recently, including hissing, biting or scratching when you pick him up?

Does your cat have any fearful behaviors, like shying away from you or startling easily?

A change in behavior like this indicates that your cat may be stressed or fearful. Perhaps you have recently added new people or pets to your home. This behavior also may mean your cat is sick or has developed arthritis with painful joints.

Does your cat use the litter box or does he urinate or defecate outside the box?

A change in litter box behavior can signal stress, pain getting into the litter box, or a significant illness that needs medical attention.

Does your cat seem to have more difficulty getting up on furniture than he used to?

Obesity & arthritis can reduce a cat's ability to play or jump. If your cat is overweight, discuss a weight loss plan with your veterinarian.

Does your cat drink more than he used to?

Increased water intake can be an early indicator of thyroid problems, kidney disease, diabetes or other medical conditions.

Has your cat had unexplained weight loss or gain?

Cats with hyperthyroidism or diabetes mellitus can lose weight despite good appetites. Many other diseases cause both appetite and weight loss. If your cat goes to the food dish and then backs away without eating, nausea or oral pain may be the source. On the other hand, obesity has become a serious health concern in cats, with increased risk of diabetes mellitus, joint disease and other problems.

Does your cat have bad breath?

Studies show that 70% of cats have gum disease as early as age 3. It's important to have your cat's teeth checked at every veterinary visit to help prevent dental disease or to start treatment of problems. Kidney disease and diabetes mellitus can also cause foul breath.

Does Your Indoor Only Cat Need Vaccines?

YES! You can never be 100% certain that your indoor kitty won't get outside or the new cat you adopted isn't harboring a transmissible disease. Remember: prevention is always better and less expensive than treatment.

***** During Hurricane Sandy – over 400 animals were displaced and moved to a shelter, many whose owners never expected them to be outside of their living room. *****

As a member of the family, your cat deserves the best possible care. Together, you and your veterinarian can create a plan that meets the needs of your cat and your family using the information you bring and a good physical examination. You are an important member of your cat's healthcare team. You can be instrumental in helping your cat live a happy and healthy quality of life.

CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN TO SCHEDULE A WELLNESS VISIT TODAY!