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Cats - Are they second class citizens?

Cats do not make it to the Veterinarian's office nearly as much as their dog counterparts do. Cats are often stealth and excellent at masking possible signs of illness before their owners become aware of it. It is important to recognize some of the symptoms that your cat may have indicating that they need a trip to the vet; decreased or increased appetite, weight loss, increased thirst and poor attitude are just some of the hallmarks of disease. Your veterinarian is there to help you recognize the first signs of sickness.

Early detection is very important to help your pet live a long life. A complete physical exam is a crucial part of any veterinary visit in order to determine our pet's health. Like human medicine, not all illnesses are visible to the naked eye. Diagnostic tests like blood panels, urinalysis and xrays are often important in making a diagnosis for any animal that is ill. Cats are no different.



Some of the most common ailments of cats are abscesses - secondary to fights, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, kidney disease, and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). If you feel that your cat is sick or not acting normally you should consult a veterinarian and schedule an exam to ensure your feline friend is ok.

Abscesses:

The most common problems we see with outdoor cats are abscesses. An abscess is a soft, painful lump on or under the skin caused by a penetrating wound. A puncture near the lump may or may not be evident. It can be found anywhere on the body but most commonly found on the face or tail region. In order for abscesses to heal, they need to be drained and antibiotics need to be administered.

Diabetes:

Cases of feline diabetes are on the rise, and given the severity of the condition, it is important to take early measures to prevent or manage the health of your diabetic cat.

Early Signs

1. Excessive Urination & Thirst

Your cat may be suffering from Type I or Type II diabetes if they are urinating frequently. The kidneys attempt to remove the excess glucose from the body through urine. The high concentration of glucose pulls excessive amounts of water into the urine. Increased urination can mean high body water losses, possible dehydration, and increased thirst.

2. Increased Weight Loss & Appetite

When a cat has diabetes, cells can no longer absorb the glucose from the blood appropriately. As a result, starved cells will trigger the breakdown of the fats and proteins available in the body as an alternative source of energy.

Later Signs

3. Inability to Jump & Loss of Interest

While the loss of interest may be a subtle sign, you can tell your cat is sick if you keep proper track of your cat's activity. If your cat can no longer jump on furniture they used to be able to, they may be sick.

4. Change in Gait

Diabetes in cats can lead to weakness, which makes them walk flat on the back of the hind legs. Following the elevated blood sugar level, neuropathy affects the nerves in the hind legs, and the condition may result in permanent paralysis if left untreated for long.

5. Lack of Appetite, Vomiting, Lethargy

The health of your cat is in jeopardy if you notice these late symptoms of diabetes mellitus. Hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, and gastroparesis can cause nausea in cats leading to vomiting, lost appetite, and lethargy.

Hyperthyroidism:

Hyperthyroidism is the most common glandular disorder in cats. It is most frequently caused by an excessive concentration of circulating thyroxine—a thyroid hormone better known as T4—in the bloodstream.

Symptoms

- Weight Loss and Increased Appetite
- Excessive thirst,
- Increased urination
- Hyperactivity
- unkempt appearance,
- Panting
- Diarrhea
- Increased shedding has also been reported.
- Vomiting is seen in about 50 percent of affected cats.

Kidney Disease:

Cats with kidney problems have a reduced ability to excrete waste products into their urine, leading to a potentially toxic build-up in the bloodstream. While some kidney problems occur suddenly, chronic kidney disease shows up more slowly over a period of time. Timely veterinary assessment with ongoing supportive care and dietary management can allow some cats with kidney problems to maintain an adequate quality of life.

Symptoms

- Appetite loss/decrease
- Weight loss
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Lethargy or depression
- Dehydration
- Change in water consumption
- Pain in the kidney area
- Litter box aversion
- Mouth ulcers
- Bad breath
- Constipation
- Bloody or cloudy urine
- Urinating in abnormal places or pain when urinating
- Stumbling, acting drunk

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD):

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a group of gastrointestinal diseases for which no single cause is known. IBD results in the inflammation of the intestines. In affected animals, chronic symptoms are seen to be related to the gastrointestinal system. Siamese cats have been found to be predisposed to IBD.

Symptoms and Types

- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Chronic intermittent vomiting
- Gas (flatulence)
- Abdominal pain
- Rumbling and gurgling abdominal sounds
- Bright red blood in stool
- Distressed coat hair

Making sure our pets live a happy and healthy life is what we all strive for. Cats are fun and loving animals that many of us have embraced in our lives. Recognizing the first sign of illness allows us to obtain the best care for them and ensuring we can maintain that human-animal bond for as long as possible. If you feel your cat may have any of these symptoms, please call and set up an appointment with one of our Veterinarians to help make sure your cat stays healthy.

For More Information:

<https://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/cat-hyperthyroidism#1>



Feline Health



SPAY AND NEUTER

Don't contribute to the overpopulation of cats, millions of which live terrible lives as strays or are put to sleep. Also reduces spraying, roaming, and aggression.



DIET AND EXERCISE

Obese cats suffer from a variety of health issues, so don't overfeed even if they beg. Offer plenty of time to play, and consult your vet about their dietary needs.



TOXICITY

Cats are vulnerable to a variety of common items. Flowers (lilies, tulips, azaleas), medications, and household chemicals are just a few. Seek veterinary help immediately.



CHECK UPS

Cats don't usually show signs of discomfort or illness until the problem has become serious, so it's important to visit the vet in order to detect issues before they become worse.



PARASITES

Both internal and external parasites are potential risks. Talk to your vet about prevention of wormlike parasites, external parasites, as well as protozoan parasites.



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