



The Holistic Cat

Complete Care for Your
Feline Companions

by

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- Taking care of your cat in a holistic and natural way
 - holistic means treating your cat as a whole being, not just its individual parts
 - natural means in keeping with nature and a cat's natural and instinctual ways
 - not every holistic method is natural and not every natural method works - common sense must prevail
- Knowing what's normal in your cat's life and behaviors - pay close attention to your cat
- Taking preventative measures to ensure your cat's health
- Knowing when it's time to consult a veterinarian
- Caring for your cat if it becomes ill, disabled, or elderly



Introduction

What this class covers



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- Cats are genetically wild - never truly tame/domesticated -
 - We have domesticated cats in our homes, not wild cats (never domesticated) or feral cats (formerly domesticated)
 - Cats live on their instincts - they are both predators and prey
 - Domestic cats are intelligent, social, and territorial
 - Cats need things to keep them busy and stimulated - toys, play time, etc.
 - Cats need daily interaction and care - you are their world
 - Cats enjoy feline interaction, are great friends to each other
 - Solo cats can get depressed (even neurotic) if left alone a lot
 - Cats understand when they are being taken care of
 - Cats can and should be trained (it's never too late to do it)

What Is The Nature of A Cat?

Cats in the Wild vs. Domestic Cats



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Outdoors is dangerous - bites, stings, injuries, allergies, chemicals, poisons, diseases, cars, malicious people





Indoor cats live longer, healthier lives, free from most dangers

- open windows with sturdy screens for lots of fresh air
- screened-in sun porches or something similar
- tethering - in a wide open area, and only when you're there
- walking on a short leash (yes, they can do it)
- outdoor confinements (cat runs, big cages, etc.)
- restrict them to certain parts of the house if necessary
- a good place for a giant litter box (e.g., an attached garage)
- plenty of toys - be careful in selecting ones that are safe
- kitty condos to play/sleep in -- if they like them

Indoor vs. Outdoor Living

You can't really monitor a cat's life outdoors.



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- Put childproof latches on cabinets containing chemicals
 - Keep kittens away from electrical wires, open refrigerators, and the backs of gas stoves & dryers
 - Don't let cats play with aluminum foil, rubber bands, yarn, thread, twist-ties, pipe cleaners, or plastic bags
 - Wrap up and secure window shade pulls to prevent strangulation
 - Put knives point end down in the drain rack
 - Put away office, hobby, sewing items, etc., when not in use
 - Don't let cats walk on newly cleaned but unrinsed floors
 - Lock up all chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, etc.)
 - Wipe up any anti-freeze that may leak or spill - it's fatal to cats
 - Do not feed your cat distilled or sparkling/mineral water, or chocolate
 - Do not use the blue stuff in toilet bowls - it's poisonous to cats
 - Do not use moth balls anywhere, including on hangers
 - Do not leave jewelry out, especially if you have a kitten
 - Many houseplants are toxic but also burn, so cats don't eat them
 - Be careful about holiday decorations - kitties might get hurt
 - Put a paste of cayenne pepper and water on stuff to keep cat off



Before You Get A Cat

Make Your House Cat/Kitten-Safe



Kittens

There's nothing cuter than a kitten!



- Kittens have their own traits and health issues
- Don't adopt a kitten if you are not home all day
- Expect problems with orphans - mothers leave them for a reason
- Have vets see what's wrong (e.g., disease, congenital, etc.)
- Kittens can't warm themselves - keep them warm - it's critical
- Hungry or cold kittens cry a lot, are listless, get dehydrated
- Adult cats (often males) may wash and sleep with kittens
- Hand-feed orphans with queen's milk (e.g., KMR) every 4 HOURS
- Wean (less milk, add watery canned food) at 4 wks; done 7 wks
- Feed by weight - overfeed = diarrhea; underfeed = no weight gain
- Kittens need 2x protein and 50% more calories per lb than adults
- Nursing bottles are easy; tube feeding is a little difficult
- Stimulate a kitten to burp, urinate, and defecate
- Keep kitten clean - damp rag for body; damp cotton ball for eyes
- Give adult cats time to get used to their new housemates

Adopting Kittens & Orphans

We accept them as they are.





Cats Adopt Kittens Too

They build bonds for life.





- Adults cats are already who they are going to be
 - may need special attention for awhile
- Adult cats can be depressed and missing their former humans or former cat pals at first
- Adult cats adapt to their new environments and new cat-friends quickly, in most cases
- Existing cats need time to adjust and get used to a new cat in the house
- Outdoor adults often adjust easily to indoor life

Adopting Adult Cats

So many wonderful cats need homes.





Multi-Cat Households

Cats raise each other, visit each other, and grow old together.

Cats have different personalities, needs, and preferences



- Food (diets, eating patterns, etc.)
- Litter box (litter types, box locations, multiple boxes, etc.)
- Activity levels (kittens v. elderly cats)
- Sleeping areas (cat beds or your bed)
- Health problems

Introduce cats and then let them manage their relationships

- Most cats will be friendly with each other (eventually)
- Some cats will never bond but will tolerate each other
- Relationships can change; some get closer, some grow apart

Multi-Cat Households

Why can't we all just get along?



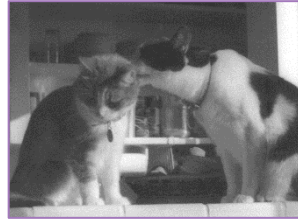


Cats Get "Married"
... and they don't get divorced.



Cats Visit Their Cat Friends

They don't forget their friends between visits.



Cats Can Be Very Friendly

Timmy never met *anyone* he didn't like.




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Cats Are Open-Minded

They engage in inter-species relationships.

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- Train your kitten from DAY ONE
 - Train adult cats you adopt too (may take a little longer)
 - Train for the word "NO" and to come when called by name
 - Train them to use the litter box (just show it to them)
 - Train them to be at home in a carrier
 - Train them to cooperate with being examined by you and the vet
 - Train them to let you clip their claws every 2-3 weeks
 - Train them to wear a collar with tags (ID, vaccination, license)
 - Train them to wear a halter and walk on a leash (optional)
 - DO NOT HIT YOUR KITTEN OR CAT
 - DO NOT USE SPRAYER OR WATER PISTOLS ON A KITTEN OR CAT



Training Your Cat

Training is for your cat and for you.



Cats Can Be Trained

T'ai & Tansy were leash-trained by 4 months of age.



Cats Are Playful
... and very entertaining!



Cats Are Mischievous

They can get into almost anything - and do!



- Litter box issues - see the veterinarian first to rule out physiological problems
- Experiment with box locations and litter types
- Make sure the box is always clean (although some cats don't seem to care)
- Scratching - encourage them to use a scratching post; use deterrents (sprays, covers, etc.)
- Declawing is not the best choice, but do NOT ever think a declawed cat is helpless or defenseless or that it can't climb or jump, etc.

Behavioral Problems

Avoid them with early training & discipline





Cats Relocate

Two days in a truck, three weeks in a hotel.

If you really love cats ...



- SPAY AND NEUTER YOUR CATS!
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Spay & Neuter Your Cats!

Do it before 4 months to avoid cancer risk later.





Get your cat vaccinated when it's a kitten

Get a rabies vaccination too (an indoor cat could get out)

Some cats are sensitive to vaccinations - tell the vet if your cat reacts adversely

Get your cat spayed/neutered right away - don't create more

deadly statistics (we don't need more dead kittens):

- spayed or neutered cats are not "its" - hormones shaped them as kittens into the adults they become
- a very few neutered male cats may mount females and spray; most stop roaming and are more docile
- spaying and neutering reduces incidences of uterine and testicular cancers
- spayed and neutered cats make much better pets

Take your cat to the vet once a year for an exam, esp. as they enter old age (12-18 years)

Veterinarian Care

The first step in responsible cat care





- Know your cat's breed and any illnesses common to that breed
- Mutts carry some of the purebred genes too
- Keep records - don't rely on your vet - keep dated notes on everything
- Examine your cat monthly - do it weekly when they are kittens so they get used to being handled
- Never hand-wrestle kittens/cats - prevents examining them when you need to; can create social problems too
- Examine them when they are relaxed or already being handled - do it in stages over days if necessary

In-Home Cat Exams

Do it monthly and keep track of everything





Brush daily - natural bristle brush; combs for detangling knots

Clip claws before anything else (train as kittens)

Examine feet, check their toe pads for injuries

Ears - clean outer area only - Q-tip - check for mites, redness, bites

Eyes - size, bulging, color changes, spots in iris, redness, discharge

Nose - look for discharge, cracking of nose pad, injuries, etc.

Mouth/teeth - open the mouth quickly, if they haven't learned this, wrap them in a towel

- remove plaque from back teeth (use finger or dental tool)
- look for signs of damaged or decayed teeth (may need the vet)
- smell breath - foul could be infection, bad decay, or poisoning

Hindquarters - check for cleanliness, no swelling, blood, or injuries

Body - when petting, look for lumps or injuries or tenderness

Watch stool and urine colors when you clean the box

- stool should be medium brown, solid, but not hard
- urine should be light yellow and not have an overly strong odor

In-Home Cat Exams

Examine Your Cat From Head to Toe



Feed your cat a healthy diet
In the wild, cats are omnivores

How much cat food costs does not indicate its healthfulness - neither does the word "natural"

Processed cat food is no better than processed human food - colorants, preservatives, etc., and even worse:

- the USDA does not require mandatory inspection of ingredients in cat food
- the USDA allows use of "4-D" foods: dead, dying, disabled, diseased (usually cancer) animal tissues
- most 4-D foods are slaughterhouse waste considered unfit for human consumption
- cat food can have pesticides, hormones, and drugs, as well as carcinogens and suspected carcinogens in it



Feeding Your Cat

What's in cat food?



- No cat should eat a dry-food-only diet or a canned-food-only diet
- Dry food does go bad in a warm room for more than a week - buy smaller bags and store in freezer
- Canned patés are no worse for a cat's teeth than solid meats/fish
- Canned foods have lots of grain and gluten in them - some cats have sensitivities to these ingredients
- Don't give your cat canned food with cheese in it - bad for their colons



Feeding Your Cat

What to Feed A Cat



- Clean food and water bowls daily - cats can smell the spoiled food from the previous meal
- Feed a variety of foods - something different every day for a week to 10 days, then start over again
- Feed them at the same time twice a day (give or take an hour) but know that many are nibblers
- Do not overfeed - base the portions on size of cat, age of cat, and activity level
- Don't give treats - often they are worst quality foods
- Do not feed your cat milk - it's not a dietary necessity and most cats don't tolerate it
- Do not feed your cat raw/uncooked meat, fish, or poultry
- Most cats won't eat cold food (although mine like cold dry food - go figure...)

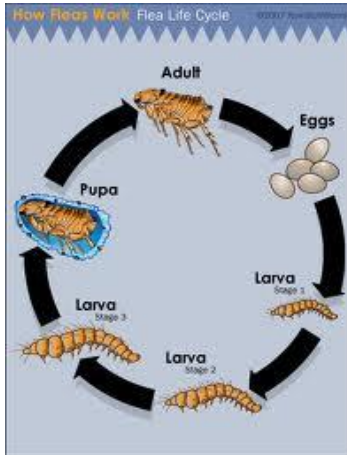


Feeding Your Cat

Finicky Cats Are Not Born - We Make Them!



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Fleas

Your Cat's Number 1 Enemy



Fleas are the cause of most health problems in cats.

It pays to know the enemy:

- fleas spend up to 100 days on a cat, mostly live in rugs and upholstery
- fleas mate on a cat - one female fleas lays 1,000 eggs/mo
- warm rooms speed up the reproductive cycle
- eggs fall into carpets and upholstery - incubate for 2-12 days
- larva hatch and feed on debris for 1-3 weeks or up to 1-2 yrs
- larva molt 3x, spin cocoons, stay in cocoons for week to YEAR
- emerge from cocoons and can go for weeks without feeding
- one they feed they have to eat or die within 48 hours
- sensitive to temperature, light, movement, air, moisture, etc.
- have no trouble finding a human or animal to feed on
- feed on the warmest and most vulnerable areas of the body (neck, groin, etc.)
- live for about a year



Fleas

The Life Of Your Cat's Worst Enemy



- Not iron-deficiency anemia; it's blood loss due to fleas
- Deficiency of red blood cells (less than 25% by volume)
- Red blood cells carry oxygen from lungs to rest of body
- Symptoms: weak, sleeps more, less social, depressed, appetite loss, weight loss, pale eyes and mouth, dull fur
- Veterinarian will also find rise in temp, reddish urine, rapid pulse and respiration
- Can be fatal to kittens, elderly, or infirmed adult cats
- Condition is commonly found in houses where preventive flea control is not done
- Cat may require blood transfusions (NOTE: cats don't have blood types)



Flea Anemia

Blood loss due to flea infestation

- Tapeworms are parasites of fleas that your cat ingests when they swallow a flea or an infected rodent
- What you see coming out of your cat are small segments (look like rice) of the much longer worm(s) still inside your cat
- Symptoms include vomiting and weight loss
- Only sure cure is Droncit - kills the worms
- Add roughage (pumpkin seeds, rice, rolled oats, etc.) to your cat's food to help expel the worm



Tapeworms

A common flea-related problem





Clean up your cat and your house:

- flea comb thoroughly, remove all fleas from the cat
- flea bath with flea shampoo or mild pet shampoo
- bathe elderly felines with a non-toxic soap and a lemon rinse
- get a commercial flea bath (not for kittens, sick, or elderly)

Put cat(s) in a carrier in your car and park your car in the shade with the windows cracked

Vacuum house top to bottom, including corners, under stuff, drapes, furniture, beds, etc.

Put vacuum bag in a plastic bag, seal it, put it outside in garbage, or burn it

Wash your bedding, your cat's bedding, and anything else they sleep on

Use hot water, bleach, and/or flea poison

Flea Control

Step-by-step killing of fleas - Part 1



Prepare your house for fogging:

- close all windows; open all the indoor doors, including garages, basements, and attics
- open all closet doors and cover your clothes with an old sheet
- cover anything valuable with an old towel or sheet
- lift cushions from chairs
- leave the house for about 2 hours (take the kitties for a ride)
- set off several flea foggers that kill pre-adult fleas (Zodiac is great)
- set off a fogger in every room, including attic, basement, and garage
- most foggers do 500 sq ft, but it depends on how the air in the house circulates (clutter prevents circulation)

When you return, open all windows and air out the house for an hour before you and your cat go back in



Flea Control

Step-by-step killing of fleas - Part 2



After fogging, prevent reinfestation

Treat carpets with a desiccant:

- 50% diatomaceous earth, 25% baking soda, and 25% cornstarch
- approx. 5 cups does an average bedroom
- sprinkle and rub into carpets, bedding, and upholstered furniture
- leave in place 1 week, then vacuum it up
- repeat the process again in 3-4 wks

Vacuum

- do carpets weekly for sure
- do house top to bottom at least monthly
- do under furniture and in corners monthly
- Discard vacuum bag immediately after use (outside or else burn it)



Flea Control

Prevent Reinfestation - Part 1



- Keep your cat indoors
- Open windows for fresh air
- Keep your cat well-fed and well-groomed
- Healthy cats are more resistant (but not immune) to fleas
- Use the neck drops (Frontline, Advantage, etc.)
- Do NOT waste money on flea collars (not even herbal ones)
- Do NOT use flea dips, esp. not on kittens or elderly or sick cats



Flea Control

Prevent Reinfestation - Part 2



Cats look healthy to avoid being prey - it's instinct
When they show symptoms, they've been sick awhile
Gently palpate your cat to find the source of the problem
A sick cat is often one that is malnourished or weakened
It's time to visit the veterinarian when:

- your cat is visibly ill or in pain (cries when touched)
- a normally friendly cat becomes aggressive to you, your other cats, or other people
- your cat hasn't eaten for more than 24-48 hours
- your cat isn't drinking, is dehydrated (test the nape skin) - this is really serious
- your cat has difficulty breathing, is panting (possible congestive heart failure)
- your cat is lethargic, lying very still, is nonresponsive
- nictitating membrane of the eye ("third eyelid") is visible



When Your Cat Is Ill

Sick or just having an off day?



Symptoms (include some or all)

- depression/lethargy
- loss of appetite
- weight loss
- bloating of abdomen
- vomiting (sporadic)
- coughing/panting/wheezing
- constipation/flatulence
- diarrhea
- discolored/yellow stool
- bloody stool
- foul-smelling stool
- visible worms in stool

Treatment


- must know exact worm or parasite to treat it correctly
- be careful about using over-the-counter medications
- get rid of the source of the problem, e.g., rodents, fleas, mosquitoes, feces



Worms & Internal Parasites

General Symptoms & Treatment



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- Roundworms - common in outdoor cats; kittens get them from infected mothers; adult cats get them from eating prey; can be passed on to human children
 - Hookworms - more common in dogs than in cats; live in the small intestine; passed in the stool, sometimes to humans; causes anemia
 - Lungworms - live in a cat's lungs; cat may cough as one symptom; caused by eating a bird or rodent that ate a snail or slug;
 - Pinworms
 - Eye worms (West Coast of U.S.)
 - Trichinosis (from eating uncooked pork)
 - Whipworms (rare)
 - Flukes/flatworms (from eating raw fish, snails, frogs, crayfish)
 - Stomach worms (from eating beetles, cockroaches, etc.)



Parasitic Worms

Indoor Cats Can Get Them Too



- Long, thin worm that lives in blood vessels and heart
- Causes lung disease in cats
- More common in dogs, but more severe in cats
- A cat's resistance is what leads to health problems
- More common in male cats
- Affects indoor and outdoor cats
- Most common in subtropical climates or near bodies of water
- Infection occurs during mosquito season (mosquitoes carry it)
- Preventative medications (once-monthly pills)
- Control mosquitoes in your yard and neighborhood (eliminate or treat standing water)
- Blood test determines if it's heartworms or bronchitis, etc.
- There is NO CURE, but cortisone can help, as can other drugs to control coughing and vomiting
- If untreated, kidney and liver damage, heart and lungs fail
- Death is sudden



Heartworms

Heartworm-Associated Respiratory Disease (HARD)






- Giardia is a parasite (trophozoite)
- Symptoms may not show up for years but an infected cats passes it on to other cats
- Fecal tests done over a 7-10 day period will reveal the active parasites
- Treatment is usually Flagyl (Metronidazole)
- Furazolidone and Fenbendazole - other treatments

Giardia (Giardiasis)

A common outdoor cat problem



- 
- dry and itchy skin - often a winter problem
 - use humidifiers and plants to increase moisture in air
 - remove allergens (smoke, chemicals, soaps, etc.)
 - food allergies - try a bland diet (for 2 weeks max.)
 - water sources - test wells (good for you too)
 - use bottled water if chlorine/fluoride in local water
 - feeding bowls - glass or ceramic (no plastic or aluminum)
 - brushing stimulates scalp and distributes cat's natural oils
 - use a natural bristle and don't brush irritated areas
 - severe allergies can cause nervousness, lethargy, lack of appetite - go to the vet
 - sometimes cortisone is the answer for temporary relief
 - the cure is to find and eliminate the cause

Allergies

Cats react to allergens like humans do





Causes include:

- degenerative joint disease (most common)
- stiff joints
- bone spurs

Symptoms

- cat lays in odd positions
- problems jumping or doesn't jump at all
- trouble getting up from laying down position
- stiff gait or limping

Arthritis

Not just an elderly cat's disease





Treatment

- keep cat warm (cold and damp worsen the pain and stiffness)
- keep the cat at normal weight
- some respond to massage and/or acupuncture
- some respond to glucosamine-chondroitin
- some need analgesics and corticosteroids from the vet
- do NOT give Tylenol (acetaminophen)
- don't give any drugs unless vet okays it
- put in ramps or "steps" so cat can get to where it wants to go



Arthritis

Keep an arthritic kitty comfortable



Cat Ears

... should be checked and cleaned regularly

- Can have partial or complete hearing loss
- Deafness can be congenital (at birth)
- White, blue-eyed cats are prone to congenital deafness, esp. Persian, Ragdoll, Rex, Angora, Maine Coon, and Manx
- Symptoms are not responding to everyday sounds, toy sounds, their name, or don't wake to a loud noise
- Deafness can be neurological or due to inflammation, disease, or damage to inner ear
- Some drugs and substances can cause deafness (antibiotics, antiseptics, diuretics, arsenic, lead, mercury)
- Keep a hearing-impaired cat indoors, try not to startle it
- Most deaf cats live normal lives and some learn signs/signals



Deafness

Many causes and most cats adapt well





Cat Eyes

... should be checked regularly



Blindness can be partial or total

Causes include:

- congenital (from birth)
- illness (cancer), eye infection, trauma, or drug reaction
- glaucoma (no cure) and cataracts (often congenital)
- diabetes (which is rare) or hypertension (high blood pressure)
- taurine deficiency, esp. as a kitten
- drug reactions
- elderly more inclined to show blindness
- some cats prone to deafness are also prone to blindness
- retinal atrophy (Bengals, Abyssinians, and Persians)

Blindness

There are many causes of vision loss



Symptoms

- misjudge heights when jumping
- bump into things, may seem clumsy
- get confused if things are moved around
- may stay in one spot all the time
- easily startled
- eyes cloudy, discolored, inflamed, pupils dilated and fixed, no response to light

Treatment

- cats adapt so quickly you don't always notice until they see nothing at all
- make their environment stable - don't move things around, keep box and food in same place
- announce yourself when you enter a room or approach the cat, avoid sudden loud noises
- keep cat indoors



Blindness

Cats adapt well to vision loss





Cat Mouth and Teeth

... should be checked regularly



- Cats have the same dental problems humans do
- Gum disease (usually from plaque)
- Cavities (mostly from diet)
- Loose or broken teeth (their teeth are for shredding)
- Missing teeth (adults usually have 30), usually genetic
- Signs of a mouth or tooth disease include:
 - loss of appetite
 - stops grooming
 - foul breath
 - drooling or trouble swallowing (gagging, choking)
 - difficulty opening the mouth (jaw problems)
- You must learn to easily open a cat's mouth:
 - to examine it
 - to clean it (remove plaque)
 - dislodge a foreign object or treat an injury

Dental Health

There are no "kitty" dentures ...





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Nose

Cats Have An Amazing Sense Of Smell

cats use their sense of smell to:

- recognize dangerous or threatening odors
- appetite stimulation (if they can't smell, they don't eat)
- identify each other (sniff face, then anal area)

nasopalatine ducts - odor-sensing mechanisms human's lack

- located on roof of mouth behind incisors
- lets air in through the mouth and then to the nose

some smells attract, others repel:

- catnip and onions are attractors
- bananas, and orange peels are repellents

normal nose pad is damp and cool

occasional sneezing is normal (could be allergies)

chronic discharge, sneezing, or noisy breathing signal illness



Nose

Nasal problems can be signs of serious illness



- Panleukopenia - feline infectious enteritis (FPL) (vaccine)
- Feline respiratory disease - rhinotracheitis (FVL) and calicivirus (FCV) (vaccine)
- Feline pneumonitis (FPN) (vaccine)
- Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) - a corona virus (vaccine)
- Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) - can lead to cancer (vaccine)
- Rabies ("hydrophobia") (vaccine - a must)
- Pseudorabies virus (PRV) - "Aujeszky's Disease" - a herpes virus (from infected pigs and raw meat) (NO vaccine)
- Chronic carrier state - cats who recover can become carriers

Viral Diseases

Most can be prevented through vaccinations





- Cancer - usually shows up in cats 10-15 yrs; cats 16 and older have reduced risk; FeLV is leading cause of cancer in cats; skin and mouth are common, as is breast cancer; other cancers include intestinal, ovarian, and uterine
- Diabetes (rare in cats)
- Hyperthyroidism - Tapazole is the treatment - buy it at your human pharmacy where it's cheaper
- Arthritis - degenerative joint disease - get pain relievers from the vet - keep cat comfortable and warm



Miscellaneous Diseases

Too many to cover in one class



- Tuberculosis (bovine type from ingesting cow's milk or eating contaminated raw beef)
- Tetanus (rare in cats) - a.k.a. "lockjaw"
- Cryptococcus meningitis (often fatal) - fungal disease
- Norcardiosis - fungal disease - respiratory or skin infection in young cats
- Coccidiosis (mainly affects kittens who then become carriers) - protozoan disease
- Toxoplasmosis - protozoan disease - hard to diagnose - caused by eating raw or undercooked meat, rodents, birds, and contact with feces of infected cats



Miscellaneous Diseases

Too many to cover in one class

- Allergic dermatitis - need to find the allergen to treat
- Lick granuloma (red, shiny ulcers)
- Ringworm - scaly, crusty, red patches with center hair loss or broken hairs - contagious to cats and people
- Demodetic mange - moth-eaten look to the face - caused by a mite, rare in cats
- Feline acne - common - pimples on chin and lips - cleanse 1-2x per day with hydrogen peroxide and water, disinfectant surgical-type soap, or anti-seborrhea shampoo (e.g., Selsun Blue)
- Veterinarians may additionally prescribe oral or topical antibiotics (Panalog) and may also lance/drain pimples



Skin Diseases & Disorders

Unattractive, Uncomfortable, & Stressful





Some cats more prone to it than others
Very common, more so with males, and more so in winter
Symptoms include:

- restlessness
- straining to pee or may stand to pee
- peeing in the house (can also be other causes)
- frequent licking of urethra/penis

Causes include:

- viruses and bacteria
- urinary crystals or stones
- early castration (penis remains small)
- alkaline urine
- steady diet of dry food only
- lack of fresh water intake

Feline Urinary Syndrome (FUS)

No cat breaks training without good reason



FUS can be in the form of cystitis (infection), urethritis, stones, mineral plugs. If untreated FUS can cause:

- scarring of bladder
- recurrent bouts that lead to stones or incontinence
- infection in kidneys and blood stream (often fatal)

TREATMENT

- keep cat indoors - this is a serious disease
- males often need catheterization and intravenous fluids
- most cats will need antibiotics
- surgery - stones (don't show on X-rays, but may on ultrasound)
- surgery - males may need urethral opening enlarged

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

- keep litter box clean - can make cat retain urine/feces
- keep diet low in magnesium (read food labels)
- make clean fresh water available at all times



Feline Urinary Syndrome (FUS)

Prevention is the answer



Can affect one or both kidneys

Causes can be due to:

- infection, usually secondary from one in the urinary tract
- inflammation or scarring due to previous old infections
- suppressed immune system

Symptoms can include:

- stiff-legged walk
- hunched-up back
- blood or pus in urine
- dehydration - test by grabbing scruff of neck
- weight loss

Sometimes symptoms don't show up until cat is uremic
(kidney failure, cat is being poisoned by its own waste)

See veterinarian at first sign to avoid permanent damage

Kidney Disease

Renal Disease, Nephritis



- Wounds, cysts, abscesses, bruises - the same things found in humans - may require draining, stitches, etc.
- Cats don't lick their wounds, so they heal slowly and can become infected easily
- Breaks are usually from falls or from being hit by a car
- Femur, pelvis, and jaw are most common break sites
- Disc compression injuries often come from falls when jumping up onto something and missing
- Sprains take longest to heal - be sure it's a sprain (X-ray) keep cat indoors on floor and comfortable
- Confinement may be necessary for some cats
- Don't treat a wound unless you know what you're doing



Injuries

Breaks, sprains, wounds, abscesses ...



- plants and berries - rarely ingested because they usually burn when eaten or don't taste good
- chemicals - pesticides, rodenticides, herbicides, fertilizers, antifreeze, household cleaners, etc.
- food poisoning (from decomposing foods, salmonella, botulism, campylobacter, E-coli, etc.)
- Bufo toads (skin affects heart when ingested - usually fatal)
- snake bites (rattlers, moccasins, copperheads, corals, etc.) - neurotoxic, usually fatal in cats
- spider and insect bites -often on feet or mouth on area (can be fatal to kittens or elderly/infirm)
- ear mites (oil will suffocate them), chiggers (harvest mites), ticks, lice, mange (from head mites)



Bites & Poisoning

Dangers lurk everywhere ...



Symptoms vary according to the type of poison, amount of poison, and health of the cat

Symptoms may include some or all of the following:

- agitation, tremors, seizures
- drooling/slobbering, paddling legs
- straining to urinate or defecate
- staggering walk, weakness, collapse
- odor on breath (sometimes like garlic)
- abdominal pain, tenderness
- labored breathing, shortness of breath, panting
- bleeding of gums or nose, blood in stool
- vomiting (it is more common to induce vomiting, but don't do this for every poison)



Bites & Poisoning

Symptoms vary widely



Acupuncture and chiropractic - should have cat experience
Vitamins, supplements, herbals, and homeopathics -
administer only on advice of or after consulting your vet

- Treating any disease or disorder requires an exact diagnosis
- Herbals and homeopathics are DRUGS - not necessarily better or safer than traditional pharmaceuticals
- Herbals and homeopathics are made from plants (pharmaceuticals are often plant derivatives, e.g., aspirin, digitalis)
- Overdoses or misapplications of vitamins, herbs, etc. can worsen a problem or be fatal
- A balanced diet should provide everything your cat needs nutritionally

Storage - dry forms last longer than liquids - store in dry, cool, dark places



Holistic Medicine

Alternative Treatments



- Do not administer unless vet tells you to
- You can overdose on vitamins as easily as drugs
- A stressed cat (old, weak, sick) may need vitamins (like B-complex) to help it heal
- Lactating queens often need B-complex and calcium
- Elderly cats with kidney problems benefit from B-complex (maybe calcium and phosphorus too)
- Brewer's yeast or nutritional yeast are good sources of B-complex vitamins (mix with food)
- Kelp and alfalfa are rich in minerals
- Cod liver oil is good source of A and D vitamins (eyes, resp. syst., hair, skin, bones, teeth, gums, etc.)



Vitamins & Supplements

Not necessary for most cats



- Homeopathics contain minute amounts of herbs in tasteless pills, powers, and liquids
- Must treat the cause, not the symptom (e.g., don't treat diarrhea, treat what causes the diarrhea)
- Water-based homeopathics are easiest to put in food or administer with an eye-dropper
- Do not mix in food if other cats eat the food too
- Response is best for long-term chronic illnesses
- Potency and dosage varies from drug to drug, cat to cat, and according to the problem being treated



Homeopathics

Allopathic Medicine



- In the wild, cats instinctively know what plants to eat when they don't feel well (but don't let them eat grass!)
- Herbal meds are versatile but very potent
- Fresh herbs are best
- Cats can be allergic to some herbs and herbal meds
- Herbal meds come in pills, powders, liquids, creams
- Response is best for acute (short term) disorders
- Can be added to food (if not fed to other cats)
- Can be applied to wounds
- Can be administered with an eye-dropper (water-based only)



Herbal Medications

Plant Medicine



Flea repellents to discourage fleas from biting:

- Sulphur 200 1x wk, 3-4 wks or Sulphur 30c, 2x wk, 3-4 wks
- *Echinacea angustifolia*- powder form - add a pinch to your cat's food 1x day (temporarily, until fleas are killed) or mix it in a teaspoon of canned food and put in cat's mouth 1x day (temporarily, until fleas are killed)
- Add garlic (minimal amt) and/or Brewer's yeast to food

Sulphur 6 or Arsenicum Alb 3 - Give 2x day for 2-3 weeks

For sores from bites:

- Apply Calendula lotion diluted with 50% tepid water with piece of cheesecloth
- Take a half-lemon, steep in water overnight, remove pulp, apply with cheesecloth



Flea Allergies

Most cats are allergic to flea saliva





- Homeopathics can help but are not always the cure or solution
- Severe anemia: Calc Phos 3x or Natrum Muriaticum 6x - Give 3x/day for 2-3 weeks
- Minor fleas: China 3 - Give every four hours for 1-2 weeks

Flea Anemia

If severe, transfusions may be necessary





Cats who have fleas are chronically itchy and uncomfortable, may have tapeworms, may have flea allergies, etc.

They can become aggressive and/or antisocial

All this stress depletes their B vitamins

Brewer's yeast is a good supplement for:

- replenishing the B's
- discouraging fleas from biting



Flea Stress

Help For A Flea-Plagued Cat



Homeopathics

- Natrum phos 6x - Give 1-3 tablets 2x day for 4-6 wks (acidifies system, makes it uncomfortable for worms)
- At same, Filix Mas 3x - Give 1x day for 4-6 wks
- At end of 4-6 wks, give one dose of Filix Mas 200



Flea Tapeworms

Helpful, but not always a cure



Crush dried leaves and flowers of any or all of:

- black alder
- eucalyptus
- laurel
- rue
- winter savory
- marigolds
- rosemary
- wormwood
- pennyroyal
- citronella

Sprinkle in your cat's bed, your bed, in rugs, upholstered furniture, etc.



Herbal Flea Repellents

Helpful, But Not The Solution

Red, blistery sores and pustules - usually from common staphylococcus

- homeopathics - Ferrum phosphoricum (tissue salt), Nux vomica (if bowels are sluggish too)
- swab affected area with infusion (tea-like liquid) of *Hydrastis canadensis* (goldenseal)
- bathe area with gentle soap and swab with green or black tea to dry up the pimples (tea stains fur temporarily)
- apply Vit E or fresh aloe vera after sores have dried up
- improvement should be in a week - if not, or if condition worsens, stop treatment and see the veterinarian



Feline Acne (Pyoderma)

Common Skin Disorder





- Restraint - avoid restraining the cat if possible
- Use the element of surprise or get them when they're sleeping
- Don't make a big production out of it
- Stay calm yourself to avoid agitating the cat
- Get it down the throat, not just in the mouth

Administering Medication

Stay Calm and a Cat Will Follow Your Lead





Furrari 22



Muffin 19



Puff 16



Izzy 19



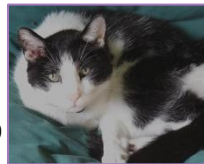
Hedy 19



Twinkle 18



Lucky 20



Timmy 19




Tansy 20



Cats Get Old ...

They can live 20 years or longer

- 
- Slows, sleeps more, plays less, poor reflexes, cranky, shy
 - Needs more attention - cuddling plus close observation
 - Needs brushing and grooming (trimming claws is important)
 - Stressed by changes - company, new pets, being boarded, etc.
 - Health issues - blindness, kidney problems, lameness, etc.
 - May need daily IV fluids or medications
 - Diet may be issue (smell fails, food sensitivity, weight loss/gain)
 - May miss the box or not use it at all
 - May need ramps/steps to get to bed or favorite window
 - May need a room of his/her own
 - Vision - nuclear sclerosis (bluish haze); cataracts are rare
 - Deafness - rare unless ear is blocked
 - Vit B helps with diminished kidney function (common in cats)
 - Minor ailments turn serious (diarrhea, dental problems, etc.)
 - No elderly feline should ever be outdoors alone
 - Natural death vs. euthanasia (what is the quality of their life?)
 - Let other cats know the cat died and didn't just disappear
 - Coping with grief, mourning your loss



Elderly Felines

15 is old, but cats can live to be 20+ (30 is possible)