

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CATS

While most contagious cat diseases are preventable with regular vaccinations from your veterinarian, your cat may experience other common health problems, brought on by an inadequate diet or exposure to environmental risks. Keeping your cat healthy begins when you bring a kitten home and as you become familiar with your cat's personality, you'll quickly notice when he's feeling out-of-sorts.

VOMITING

Cats eat some pretty strange things. Even indoor cats may find loose thread under the sofa and tug at it until it comes loose before eating it. Vomiting is common in cats when something disagrees with their stomach. But recurrent vomiting increases the risk of dehydration. Make sure your cat has fresh water available. Contact your veterinarian if the cat's vomit resembles coffee grounds or feces or if your cat vomits more than four times in a 24-hour period. It might just be a hairball but it might be something more serious.

DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea that lasts longer than one day should prompt a call to your veterinarian. Frequently, diarrhoea in cats is the result of parasites or a change in food but bacteria and poison may be the culprits if the diarrhoea came on suddenly and your cat ate nothing out of the ordinary. If blood is present in the stool, it signals an emergency. For cats that experience occasional diarrhoea due to food changes, a tablespoon of canned (not sweetened) pumpkin puree may soothe their digestive tract and assist in setting their stools.

URINARY

One of the most common health problems in domestic cats involves their urinary tract. Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is more common in male cats and they may try unsuccessfully to urinate every few minutes. Cat food high in magnesium contributes to the formation of urinary tract stones, which may block the urethra, resulting in blocked urine and pain. If a small amount of urine, tinged with blood, is present or if your cat howls in pain, take him immediately to the veterinarian.

RESPIRATORY

Cats often get the sniffles, watery eyes or even a slight cough. Just like humans, your cat can catch a cold that affects his respiratory tract and sinuses. As long as your cat still has an appetite and is playing normally, there is little to worry about. However, if his eye discharge becomes green or sticky, or if he refuses to eat or drink, contact your vet.

WOUNDS

Cats are adventurous, especially if they spend part of their time outdoors. A fight with another cat may produce wounds that are difficult to find under thick fur. Clean all new wounds with antibacterial solution to reduce the risk of infection. If a wound becomes infected, it will form an abscess, which may burst and drain. Your cat may limp or hold one of his paws up if a wound is infected and causing pain. Your veterinarian may prescribe oral antibiotics and may administer an antibiotic injection.

Every cat owner is concerned about their cat's health and well-being. Just like any other animal, cats suffer from a set of common health problems, including parasites, viral or bacterial infection and chronic disorders or conditions.

OBESITY

When it comes to weight gain, a cat's body works in a very similar way to the human body: more food equals more fat. Simply put, the more food your cat eats, the more weight he will gain. A lack of exercise also contributes to weight gain. Some cats can sleep a whopping 18 hours per day, leaving only 6 hours for any type of exercise. Cats that are in their senior years are particularly prone to weight gain, as their metabolism slows down and their activity level steadily declines.

CAT SCRATCH FEVER

Cat Scratch Fever is caused by a bite or scratch from a cat. It can affect humans or cats, but it causes no symptoms in cats. In humans, symptoms can include skin rash, fatigue, and loss of appetite, fever, or headache. Cat Scratch Disease is not fatal for cats or humans, so it normally does not require treatment, but if symptoms linger, you should consult your doctor.