

## Monitoring for Potential Health Problems in Your Cat

Preventive care not only helps to detect disease in its early stages, when it is most likely to respond to treatment, but it also can help you avoid significant medical expense and risk to your pet’s health.

Routine preventive care also helps your veterinarian establish normal baseline laboratory values when your pet is young and healthy. Even subtle changes from baseline values can help identify disease as your pet ages, long before they become apparent to you or your veterinarian.

Organ/System	Potential Health Risks	Possible Result If Left Untreated
Teeth and mouth	Gingivitis, periodontal disease, oral cancer	Oral pain, tooth abscesses, tooth loss, systemic infection, cancer progression
Nose and throat	Inflammation/infection, bleeding, tumors	Progression of local infection, systemic infection, breathing difficulty, nosebleeds, cancer progression
Liver and gallbladder	Inflammatory liver disease, reaction to certain drugs and toxic substances, cancer, stones of the gallbladder and bile ducts	Jaundice, liver failure, anemia, bleeding disorders, neurologic signs, cancer progression, death
Kidneys	Acute and chronic kidney diseases, kidney stones, kidney infection, cancer	Irreversible kidney damage, kidney failure, high blood pressure, blindness, anemia, death
Heart and lungs	Heart muscle disease, leaky heart valves, irregular heart rhythms, heartworm disease, bronchitis, pneumonia	Poor circulation, fluid buildup in lungs and/or belly, congestive heart failure, pneumonia, sudden death
Glands/endocrine system	Diabetes, thyroid disease, adrenal disease	Cataracts, blindness, wasting, hair/coat changes, hair loss, excessive thirst/urination, skin infections, collapse, death
Eyes and vision	Corneal ulcers, cataracts, dry eye, glaucoma, deformation and/or infection of eyelids	Pain, progressive blindness, loss of eye
Digestive/gastrointestinal system	Intestinal parasites, intestinal blockage, other intestinal infections, inflammatory bowel disease, colitis, pancreatitis, cancer	Malnutrition (inability to absorb nutrients from food), wasting, chronic diarrhea, gas, abdominal pain, cancer progression, death
Skin	Allergies, fleas, mites, ticks, lumps, skin infections, ear infections	Hair loss, foul odor, vector-borne infections, worsening infections, hearing loss, cancer progression, death

For more information about preventive care, talk to your veterinarian—your best resource for information about the health and well-being of your pet.



Tina & L'il Red

## Preventive Care for Your Cat



# Preventive Care for Your Feline Friend

Your pet's health changes with age, just as yours does. But our pets age much faster than we do.

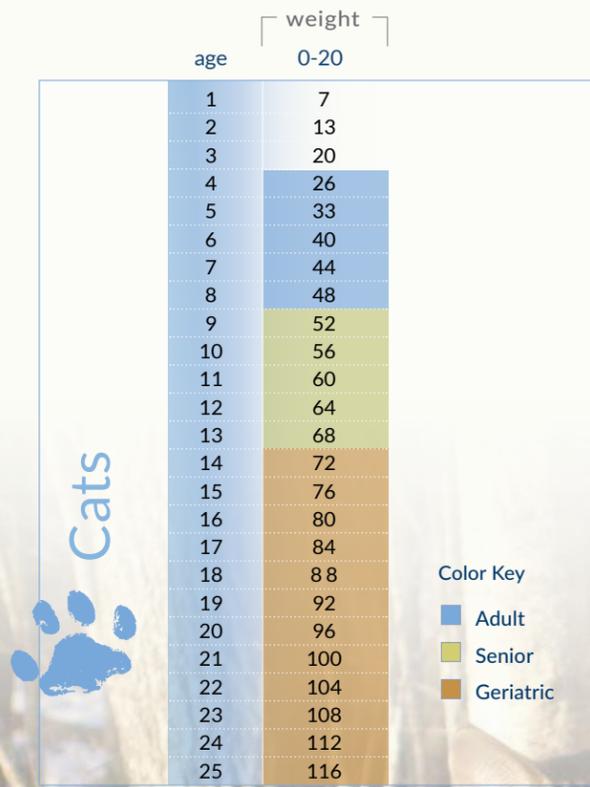


Chart courtesy of Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DABVP

Do you know how old your cat is relative to you, or in "people years?" Use the chart (at left), based on your cat's age and weight, to find out!

Regardless of your pet's age, you play a key role in helping him combat illness and remain as healthy as possible. Remember, your cat cannot describe symptoms to you, but he will show you signs of disease or illness. Awareness of the signs of the most common diseases is one way to help reduce your pet's risk. It's a little scary to consider that 10% of pets that appear healthy to their owners and veterinarians during their annual visits have underlying diseases.<sup>1</sup>

# Testing Can Uncover Hidden Health Problems in Your Cat

**Blood**

CBC is used to screen for:

- Anemia (low red blood cells)
- Inflammation
- Infection
- Stress
- Leukemia
- Bleeding problem
- Inability to fight infection
- Hydration status

**Teeth**

Dental exams uncover abnormalities in teeth and the soft tissue of the mouth. Oral disease may indicate secondary health problems.

**Thyroid**

Biochemistry and serum T4 tests can indicate thyroid disease.

**Heart and Lungs**

Immunoassay tests can detect heartworm infection, which can cause disease in the heart as well as in the lungs.

**Liver**

Biochemistry tests can indicate:

- Liver disease
- Dehydration
- Obstruction of the bile ducts
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications

**Kidneys**

Blood and urine tests can indicate:

- Early kidney disease
- Kidney failure
- Infection
- Stones
- Cancer
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications

Urinalysis and urine protein: creatinine ratio tests are used to better evaluate:

- Kidney function
- Urinary tract
- Kidney infection

**Pancreas and Intestine**

Biochemistry tests can indicate:

- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Abnormalities resulting from long-term medications
- Cancer

Fecal tests identify parasites that can cause:

- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Blood loss
- Infections in humans (zoonosis)

Early detection. Reduced risk. Peace of mind.

While the physical exam is important, the picture of your pet's overall condition is not complete without these diagnostic tests. Blood testing can frequently

detect illness in your cat before we see any outward signs of disease. Testing gives veterinarians immediate insight not otherwise available.

## Preventive Care May Include:

- Chemistry tests** to screen for kidney, liver, and pancreatic disease, as well as to check sugar levels
- Complete blood count (CBC)** to rule out blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests** to ensure your cat isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- Infectious disease screening** to test for feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)
- Heartworm test** to screen for feline heartworm disease
- Fecal tests** to rule out intestinal parasites
- Urine tests** to screen for urinary tract infections and other diseases, and to evaluate the kidneys' ability to concentrate urine
- Thyroid test** to determine if the thyroid gland is producing too much thyroid hormone
- Cardiac tests** to rule out heart-related issues
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)** to screen for an abnormal heart rhythm, which may indicate underlying heart disease

## The 10 Signs Your Cat May Be Sick Are:

- Bad breath or drooling
- Excessive drinking or urination
- Appetite change associated with weight loss or gain
- Change in activity level (lack of interest in doing things they once did)
- Stiffness, difficulty getting up, or trouble climbing stairs
- Sleeping more than usual or other behavior and attitude changes
- Coughing, sneezing, excessive panting, or labored breathing
- Dry or itchy skin, sores, lumps, or shaking of the head
- Frequent digestive upsets or change in bowel movements
- Dry, red, or cloudy eyes

<sup>1</sup> Rehm M. Seeing double. Veterinary Economics. 2007;48(10):40-48.