

Tips for the older cat

Keep Healthy - Keep Active

- Keep your cat active** and you'll help keep the heart, lungs, muscles and joints healthy. An active life helps control weight, and makes life more fun!
- Stimulate your cat by regular playful interaction.** Be upbeat and cheerful! Try new toys, chase games, cardboard boxes and paper bags to explore, hide food in interesting places. Provide high ledges and resting places, and easy access to them by a series of little jumps.
- Make the litter tray attractive** - somewhere private, away from food and water. Consider using a soft clumping litter - these are more comfortable to stand on than conventional litters.
- Make water interesting** - Cats are not keen on tapwater. Try rainwater, or bottled water. Encourage drinking by using an indoor cat water fountain, or have a slightly leaky tap outside for them to drink from (can be controlled by a plant watering timer). They love drips!

Keep your cat comfortable

- Grooming.** Most cats appreciate a thorough grooming. Daily grooming refreshes and re-vitalises the body. For cats that allow it wet-wipes are ideal for freshening the face, feet and bottom.
- A Comfortable Bed (and a good night's sleep)** becomes more important as the years go by. **Vet-Bed** or a similar type of washable bedding helps rest ageing limbs comfortably.

Weight _____ Ideal weight _____ Date _____

Visit our website: www.vet-healthcentre.co.uk

Pet's Name

Improving Quality of Life for your older cat

*Don't put anything down to old age!
If there is a problem - there is usually a solution.*

Common Age-Related Problems

- **Dental problems** cause sore teeth, painful gums and bad breath. Infection in the mouth results in poor health. It can also cause kidney and heart disease. Dental treatment improves health and quality of life.
- **Stiffness and arthritis** cause cats to slow down and have difficulty jumping. The pain interferes with comfortable rest, and they are often unable to groom themselves properly so the coat may become matted. Effective pain relief will give an older cat a new lease of life which can be a joy to see.
- **Weight loss** - can be an early sign of thyroid disease, kidney failure, diabetes, digestion failure, or a tumour. Many of these problems can be treated successfully.

Other symptoms to look out for: Thirst - can be a sign of diabetes or kidney problems. Lumps, bumps and swellings - many growths and tumours can be treated effectively. Breathing problems, coughing, reduced vision or hearing loss.

**For improved quality of life, bring your
older cat for a Health Check
with the vet every 6 months.**

Daisy Street Veterinary Centre, Blackburn (01254) 53622

Vets: John Davies MRCVS, David Higginson MRCVS, Sam Purcell MRCVS
Practice Manager: Ruth Swan VN BSc(Hons) PhD

Mar 2014@ Daisy Street

Making life better for the older cat

Treat an older cat as a kitten by making life simple and secure. Make sure everything they need is in one room so they don't have to go far to find their food or bed. Provide cosy dens. Sometimes using a house cage gives security and better rest. Keep the furniture in the same places - moving things around can confuse older cats.

Give them stimulation to play. Short bursts of entertaining quality time. Encourage them to walk round the garden with you and explore. Behaviour therapy may be helpful (ask the vet).

Anxiety and confusion?

Older cats may show signs of anxiety or confusion. We can improve quality of life in most cases by medication, diet adjustment and simple behaviour therapy. Sometimes the underlying problem is pain, and pain relief can solve the problem.

Feeding - Food enrichment can help

Use a good quality senior diet such as Hills. High quality oil supplements - fish oils, coconut oil, olive oil and essential fatty acids (EFA's) will help with ageing.

How old is your cat?

Cat years compared to human years

Cat's age	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
Human age	16	23	29	33	37	41	49	57	65	73	81	89	97

Essential Health Care for the Older Cat

- SIX MONTHLY HEALTH-CHECK** with the vet, or **three-monthly as they get older will help spot problems early**
- TEETH CARE** - Deal with dental problems early. Modern anaesthetics are very safe and much less risky than leaving a bad mouth untreated.
- A QUALITY SENIOR DIET** tailored to your cat's needs. Getting the diet right can make such a difference to health. We have a range of speciality diets for older cats
- BOOSTER VACCINATION** - older cats need protection more as their immune system gets weaker with time.
- WORM** 3 monthly with Milbemax. Worms can cause anaemia especially in older cats.
- FLEA PREVENTION** all year round.
 - fleas suck blood, lots of it, and will weaken an older cat.
 - Be safe - use only licenced veterinary flea products.
- WATCH THE WEIGHT**
 - Overweight cats need to slim using a true low-calorie food.
- NEUTERING**
 - Male and female cats that are not neutered have a high risk of serious diseases including some forms of cancer as they get older.
- PET HEALTH INSURANCE** - do keep it up -
 - this is when you need it!
- ANNUAL BLOOD TEST and THYROID CHECK**
 - to detect treatable problems early before they become unwell.