

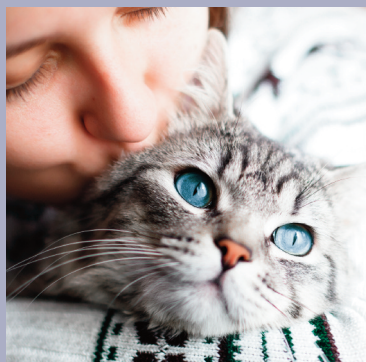
Feline Hypertension

COMMON CAT CAREGIVER QUESTIONS



What causes high blood pressure in cats?

There are a number of diseases that can cause high blood pressure in cats, such as kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, and heart disease. There are some uncommon diseases and medications that can cause high blood pressure in cats as well. There is also a term called “idiopathic hypertension” which is used to describe cases where no underlying cause has been identified. Additionally, some cats will experience



temporary elevations in blood pressure when they are stressed, but their blood pressure is normal the rest of the time. These cats are said to have “situational hypertension.”

What are some of the signs of feline hypertension I can look out for?

Noticeable signs of high blood pressure often relate to damage in the kidneys, eyes, brain, and heart. A few common signs of feline hypertension include:

- Trouble breathing
- Unexplained changes in behavior
- Increased drinking
- Evidence of blindness (e.g., bumping into furniture, missing jumps)

The Cat Friendly Homes *Feline Hypertension* webpage (catfriendly.com/hypertension) describes these signs. Some cats will not show any signs. Routine veterinary visits are critical because having your cat’s blood pressure checked as part of their routine wellness checkup will help establish your cat’s baseline blood pressure, monitor trends, and detect high blood pressure even if your cat is not showing signs.

What is involved with screening a cat for feline hypertension?

Blood pressure is determined using a device that either measures the sound of blood flow through the blood vessels (Doppler) or the motion of the blood through the blood vessels (Oscillometry). Blood pressure is measured in cats very much like it is measured in humans. However, smaller blood pressure cuffs are used as well as different sites for cuff placement, including the tail.

My cat was diagnosed with high blood pressure. How can I help my cat?

A diagnosis of feline hypertension means your cat may need to be given medication to lower their blood pressure for the rest of their life. Blood pressure medications for cats are administered once to twice a day. The Cat Friendly Homes *Giving Your Cat Medication* webpage (catfriendly.com/giving-cat-medication) has tips for administering oral medications with links to videos demonstrating how to give a cat medication in both pill and liquid form. Be sure to schedule the follow-up visits that your veterinarian recommends. When first diagnosed, your veterinarian will want to see your cat more often to make sure he is responding to treatment and his blood pressure is coming under control. Afterwards you can expect to have your cat’s blood pressure checked about every 3-6 months.

How can I help keep my cat calm when his blood pressure is checked in order to help reduce false elevated readings from stress?

Your cat’s veterinary visit begins at home. The best way to reduce stress prior to the visit is to help your cat become comfortable and familiar with the carrier. This can help keep your cat calm prior to arriving in the veterinary practice. The Cat Friendly Homes *Getting Your Cat to The Veterinarian* website (catfriendly.com/getting-cat-veterinarian) provides helpful tips and a video about helping your cat learn to associate the carrier with a positive experience, and getting an unwilling cat into the carrier.

For more information, visit
catfriendly.com/hypertension.

