Your Cat’s Life Stages

There are many ways to keep your cat healthy and happy throughout their life. As a member of the family, your cat deserves the very best possible care. One of the best ways to ensure your cat stays happy and healthy is by making sure they have their preventive care checkups. Your veterinarian will perform a thorough checkup and discuss the information in this brochure based on your cat’s life stage. Utilize this information to observe your cat each day and call your veterinarian immediately if you see any changes in your cat’s behavior or routine.

For more information on feline life stages, visit www.catfriendly.com/life-stages.

You are an important member of your cat’s healthcare team. You are instrumental in helping with the success of treatments and improved healthcare for your cat.

What your cat requires will change as they age. Cats’ lives are broken into four stages: kittens, young adults, mature adults, and seniors. Each stage requires special attention to certain health and behavioral areas. The chart in this brochure includes a breakdown of life stages your cat advances through, and concentrates on how to best support them in each stage. Use this information to observe your cat at home, as well as discuss these items with your veterinarian during your cat’s checkups.
### Veterinary Checkups

**At All Ages**
- Watch for subtle signs of behavior, illness, pain, and stress
- Understand normal feline behaviors and that changes in your cat’s behavior can be significant
- Get your cat comfortable with the carrier
- Schedule routine checkups for your cat which can help them long-term
- Discuss identification for your cat (microchipping)
- Understand scratching is a natural, normal feline behavior; learn about caring for claws
- Discuss pet insurance and financial planning options

- At least once per year (more frequent for cats with health conditions)
- At least every 6 months

**At Home**
- Number and location of resources (litter box, food, water, sleeping areas)
- Housing (indoor/outdoor/partial outdoor access), hunting activity, and others in the home
- Housemate cats and their usual interactions
- Changes in behavior, problematic or unwanted behaviors, and use of positive reinforcement
- Environmental needs (toys, scratching posts, resting places, play)

- Get used to mouth handling and brushing/wiping of teeth
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**Infectious Diseases, Genetic Findings, and Discuss Sterilization (Spay/Neuter)**

- Common conditions for specific breeds and genetic concerns (if applicable)
- Vomiting, hairballs, diarrhea, changes in behavior, and grooming habits
- Changes in appetite, hydration, vomiting, diarrhea, vocalization, nighttime activity, mobility, vision, litter box habits, and grooming habits

- Infectious diseases, genetic findings, and discuss sterilization (spay/neuter)
- Heart, lungs, skin, and teeth
- • Increased focus on the abdomen, heart, lungs, thyroid, kidneys, eyes, and teeth
- • Muscle and bone assessment, and thorough pain and arthritis assessment

**Food Being Fed, Amount Being Fed, Frequency of Feeding, and Food Toy/Puzzles**

- Food being fed, amount being fed, frequency of feeding, and food toy/puzzles
- Weight gain, obesity risks, play, and exercise
- Weight loss and weight gain, type of food being fed to ensure it provides what your mature adult/senior cat needs, and prescription diets (if needed)

**Effects of Dental Exam, Dental Disease, Preventive Care, and Home Care with Brushing/Wiping of Teeth**

- Litter box setup, location, litter type, cleaning, and litter preference
- Normal toileting behavior
- • Litter box setup, location, litter type, cleaning, and litter preference
  - Review and adjust litter box size and location to accommodate growth
  - • Litter box location to avoid stairs
  - • Review and adjust litter box size, location, and cleaning regimens as necessary

- Litter box habits, stool appearance, and litter ball size
- Urination or defecation outside the litter box
- Differences between toileting and marking (territory) behaviors
- Litter box management (number of boxes, size, location, litter type, cleaning)

- Oral Health
- Specific dental food type (if needed)
- Changes in appearance of your cat’s mouth, if your cat appears to be in pain when eating, or if your cat is not eating or chewing

**Parasite Control**

- Risks of parasites for cats regardless of indoor/outdoor status
- Risks of exposure based on lifestyle, geographic location, and travel
- Year-round treatment for the prevention of heartworms, fleas, ticks, and intestinal parasites (regardless of indoor/outdoor status)
- Zoonotic risks (diseases passed between animals and people)

**Medical History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KITTEN</th>
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<th>MATURE ADULT</th>
<th>SENIOR</th>
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### Items to Focus on During Each Life Stage

*Observe at home and discuss with your veterinarian*