

Nose to tail

Companion animal newsletter



Feeding Senior Cats

Michelle Stodart, BVSc

Diet plays a very important role in the health of our pets which is why we recommend feeding a veterinary approved high quality diet appropriate for their age and stage of life.

Cats begin to show age-related changes starting from about 7 years of age. At this time we recommend transitioning from an adult diet to a senior diet to help best manage these changes.

Common changes seen in ageing cats:

- ✓ Loss of muscle mass
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Dental disease
- ✓ Coat and skin changes

When feeding senior cats we aim to maintain health and an optimal bodyweight, while also slowing or preventing the development of disease and reducing or improving signs of diseases that are already present.

There are a wide range of diets appropriate for our senior cats, as individual animals have differing needs. There are also veterinary diets available which are specially formulated to help with management of common diseases seen in our ageing cats such as renal disease, dental disease and diabetes.

We also recommend regular check-ups at least yearly for our senior pets to enable us to pick up any problems early and provide treatment.

We have highly trained staff members available who can help with selecting the best diet for your pet so don't hesitate to pop in or give us a call for more information.



Key Points:

- ✓ Feed a good quality veterinary approved diet
- ✓ Start your cat on a senior diet at about 7 years of age
- ✓ Ensure regular vet check-ups to monitor for any health problems



TALK TO THE TEAM at your local clinic about ideal food options as your animal transitions to senior years. We carry both the Hills and Royal Canin ranges.



Does my pet have diabetes?

Alice Neville-Smith, BVSc

Common changes seen in ageing cats:

Diabetes develops due to a decrease in insulin production or the development of insulin resistance. Insulin's role is to help move glucose (sugars) from the blood into cells for use within the body. Without enough/effective insulin, animals are left with high levels of glucose in the blood, called hyperglycaemia.

When this occurs, glucose is removed from the body in the urine, leading to a symptom called glycosuria, and increased urination and thirst. These changes can also put our pets at risk of developing a bacterial UTI (urinary tract infection) where bacteria gets into the bladder causing pain and inflammation.

What does diabetes look like in my pet?

It is most commonly seen in middle aged female dogs and middle aged/older, obese, male cats. But any breed or age group can be affected.

How is diabetes diagnosed?

A combination of the clinical signs and the age and body condition of your pet may give us some clues and tell us what we need to test for. A blood test will show hyperglycaemia, and a urine sample will show glycosuria.

How is diabetes treated?

Insulin injections are given under the skin 1-2 times daily at home. Ongoing blood glucose tests in clinic may be needed to work out the effective dose of insulin

Feeding diets high in complex carbohydrates and fibre and low in fat to help reduce obesity and minimise the chances of insulin resistance developing

Regular exercise to reduce body fat

If left untreated, diabetes can lead to life threatening conditions such as diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) and multi-organ failure.

What can I do to prevent it?

Maintaining a healthy weight by feeding well formulated and age appropriate pet diets and regular exercise. Treats are okay sometimes but shouldn't be given all the time!

Common Signs of diabetes can include

- ✓ Increased drinking
- ✓ Increased urinating, or frequent accidents in toilet trained animals
- ✓ An increased or decreased appetite
- ✓ Weight loss
- ✓ Cataracts in dogs
- ✓ Weakness or low energy levels

Body Condition Score: Medium Dog

TOO THIN		
 <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance• No discernible body fat• Obvious loss of muscle mass	 <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, and pelvic bones easily visible• No palpable fat• Some bony prominences visible from a distance• Minimal loss of muscle mass	 <p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs easily palpable and may be visible with no palpable fat• Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible, pelvic bones becoming prominent• Obvious waist and abdominal tuck
IDEAL		
 <p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs easily palpable with minimal fat covering• Waist easily noted when viewed from above• Abdominal tuck evident	 <p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs palpable without excess fat covering• Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above• Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side	 <p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs palpable with slight excess of fat covering• Waist is discernible when viewed from above but is not prominent• Abdominal tuck apparent
OVERWEIGHT		OBESE
 <p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover• Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail• Waist absent or barely visible• Abdominal tuck may be absent	 <p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover or palpable only with significant pressure• Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail• Waist absent• No abdominal tuck• Obvious abdominal distension may be present	 <p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine, and base of tail• Waist and abdominal tuck absent• Fat deposits on neck and limbs• Obvious abdominal distension



Glass Bellies and Garbage Guts

Finn Mahoney, BVSc

Picture this. It's a Monday afternoon. You're in a hurry. You have kids to pick up from school, grocery shopping to do, and an appointment to get to. In your rush to get out the door, a glass jar of peanut butter is knocked off the kitchen counter and smashes to the ground. You quickly scoop up the peanut butter covered bits of glass and deposit them into the rubbish bin. You leave the house. Unbeknownst to you, your ravenous Staffordshire terrier awaits in the corner – licking her lips.

That evening you arrive home to find chaos. The contents of the bin have been strewn across the kitchen floor. Your beloved pooch has gotten into the rubbish, and in the process ingested shards of delicious peanut butter coated pieces of glass.

This is a very real case seen by one of our vets earlier this year. A series of x-rays confirmed a stomach containing multiple shards of glass – all at risk of causing a perforation. Due to the complicated nature of removing glass from the stomach, the dog was referred to a specialist in Auckland for surgery. Thankfully the procedure was successful and the patient recovered well.

Hungry hounds with “garbage bellies” are not uncommon visitors to our clinic. Some dogs just gulp first and think about the consequences later. Just in the last year we have had to surgically remove golf balls, corn cobs, fish hooks, and a gardening glove! Feeding bones is a big risk factor for obstruction, and is the reason why many vets suggest not feeding any bones at all to your dog.

Excessively fatty meals, such as trimmings from the roast thrown in the bin, can also result in a very serious disease known as pancreatitis. It isn't always caused by a soiree into the garbage, it can also be caused by feeding fatty table scraps as a treat. The excessive consumption of fat results in an abnormal activation of enzymes in the pancreas – causing the pancreas to effectively digest itself. This is an incredibly painful condition, and if not dealt with quickly can be fatal. Remember your dog is much smaller than you, so even that rind of fat from your pork chop can be a huge amount for your furry friend!

Both acute pancreatitis and gastrointestinal obstruction can have very similar symptoms, and are not always obvious. Things to look out for include vomiting, diarrhoea or constipation, lethargy, and inappetence. As an owner, it is very important to pay attention to your pet's toileting and eating habits so that illness is picked up quickly. The longer it is left, the poorer the prognosis can be.

The moral of this story is two-fold. First, consider your current rubbish bin. How easy is it to knock over? If you have a particularly ravenous dog (we're looking at you Labradors...) it may be worthwhile investing in a sturdy rubbish bin, or locking it away in another room when going out. Secondly, always take note of your dog's toileting habits. As an owner of a cat or dog, one of the everyday useful animal care things you can do, is watch what your animals eat and when, as well as their defecation habits as it can provide vital information at diagnosis.



Spring Clean and aim for Flea Free Summer

A reasonably mild winter can mean fleas are getting ready for summer.

Pet owners need to start thinking about a flea control strategy now before numbers are out of control in the warmer weather.

Only about 5 per cent of the flea population lives as adults on a pet. The remaining 95% live in the environment as eggs, larvae and pupae which develop into adults. These concentrate around pets' sleeping areas and like hiding in carpets, cracks between floorboards and under debris in the garden.

Females lay up to 50 eggs per day, which then hatch into larvae that crawl into dark spaces, where they develop in cocoons.

WIN with BRAVECTO!



Order and/or call in subject to Alert Level to pick up your preferred flea treatment for your pet and if it's Bravecto for your cat enter the Bravecto Microchip feeder competition. Promo runs from 15 September- 15 October.

New adult fleas can then emerge from these cocoons in as little as eight days, usually in response to vibration from a pet walking past or by their body heat, and then jump onto a pet to start the cycle all over again.

Spring Cleaning Flea Tips

- ✓ Clean your pet's blankets, beds, and throw rugs in a hot wash
- ✓ Vacuum furniture and car seats where pre-adult fleas, larvae and egg are likely to be
- ✓ Vacuum your house, even wood flooring and tiles where eggs, larvae and pupae can be present. Dispose of the vacuum cleaner contents in a closed bag.
- ✓ Remove piles of plant debris that pets may like to sleep on from the garden

Book in your routine requirements with your local Vet Centre clinic.

Waipu Clinic

53 The Centre | 09 432 0693
✉ waipu@thevetcentre.net.nz

Ruawai Clinic

23 Jellicoe Road | 09 439 2506
✉ ruawai@thevetcentre.net.nz

Mangawhai Clinic

36 Moir St | 09 431 4535
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Maungaturoto Clinic

184 Hurdall St | 09 431 8318
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