Cat Healthcare Tips

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

9 tips toward a longer & healthier life for your cat

1. ## Neuter or spay your cat
   Besides the obvious benefit of population control, "fixing" your pet is proven to dramatically improve behavior, especially in males. In 9 out of 10 animals, alteration reduces fighting, roaming/yowling, and spraying. In females, you can also virtually eliminate the risk and number of life-threatening health problems, including breast cancer.

2. ## Keep them inside
   The average life span for indoor cats is 13 years, though we have seen many indoor cats live well beyond 20 years. Outdoor cats, on the other hand, live an average of less than 3 years. Contributing to the shorter life of outdoor cats are motorized vehicles and a host of dogs, wild animals or other cats - all potential sparring partners or carriers of disease.

3. ## Make sure they get their shots
   Stay current on all vaccinations. Many of the diseases that have killed a large number of cats in the past are no longer a threat if you adhere to the vaccination schedule we provide. Vaccinating at home makes it very affordable (around $10 and five minutes of your time) to provide this protection to your cat, particularly for your adult cats that require only boosters of combination vaccines.

4. ## Take care of their teeth
   In cats over 2 years old, dental problems from lack of proper care rank among the top reasons for veterinary visits... even though many of these expensive bills can be avoided with simple, preventive dental care performed regularly at home.

5. ## Keep them slim
   Don't let your cat get overweight. Many life-ending health problems are caused by obesity, particularly in older cats. Don't overfeed or give too many treats. Consider using a light cat food and keep your cat active by playing with her every day. Play also keeps your cat's mind active, which keeps her from becoming lethargic.

6. ## Keep their minds and bodies active
   The pet market has exploded with cat toys that were not even dreamed of ten years ago. The Ba-Da-Beam Laser and a plethora of cat trees and other furniture will ensure that your cat is never bored. Browse through our website to come up with ideas for your cat's personality.

7. ## Make every calorie count
   Provide good nutrition by feeding a high quality premium food. Though they are more expensive, they are worth it for the nutrition they provide. Drs. Foster & Smith offer a Premium Healthy Cat Food that is nutrient dense to give your cat the vital nourishment she needs.

8. ## Balance nutrition with supplements
   If your cat is not eating well, she may need a vitamin and mineral supplement such as Lifestage Select® Premium Vitamins for Cats.
   If your cat has dry, flaky skin, use Vitacaps®; if her coat is dull, use V Vitacoat® Plus for cats. They both contain Essential Fatty Acids to

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help with these conditions. If your older cat has an arthritic condition, try a glucosamine/chondroitin supplement like Joint Care.

9. ## Regular checkups

Remember to take your cat in for annual checkups (or more often if your cat is a senior) and whenever behavior makes you suspect something is wrong, take her to a veterinarian. Cats are closer to their wild relatives than dogs and will tend to hide illness more readily. Because of this, cat owners need to be more attentive to "hidden" symptoms.

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