

Head to Tail Health Assessments at Home

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Cat Healthcare: Cat Anatomy 101 Basic Care Cat Anatomy 101: Basic Healthcare



Observe your cat and do a perfunctory examination each month to recognize health problems early and add to your cat's longevity. The extra attention will benefit your cat and you!

The following is a very simple at-home assessment you can do yourself. Report any problems to your veterinarian.

General Appearance: Watch your cat walk around. Note any limping, check weight status. (Is she gaining or losing weight?) Is she alert? Is her disposition normal?

Eyes: Any discharge, redness or inflammation? Any cloudiness? Have you noticed any signs of sight impairment such as not seeing toys, bumping into things?

Ears: Discharge from the ears? Are the canals reddened or irritated? If so, she could have an infection or ear mites (generally black, crumbly discharge and severe itching). Smell the ears. Do they have a rank or yeasty odor? The ears should smell clean. Clean ears regularly with appropriate cleaning products, as recommended by your veterinarian.

Nose: Any nasal discharge? Is her breathing congested? If so, she may have an upper respiratory infection. See your veterinarian.

Mouth and Throat: Lift up the lips and look at the gums. Are they inflamed? Are any teeth broken or missing? Any tartar buildup on the teeth? Any facial swelling? Any swelling on the throat? A regular dental hygiene program can really make a difference.

Abdomen: Run your hands over your cat's abdomen. Is she in pain? Does the abdomen seem distended? Here's another opportunity to check weight status. Any unusual lumps or bumps? Is your cat using the litter box regularly and normally?

Neck and Spine: Run your hands down her back from the neck to the end of the tail. Any obvious pain? Any obvious limitations of movement? Does your cat have difficulty jumping to her favorite Perch? If you think your cat has neck and spinal problems, contact your veterinarian.

Skin and Coat: Is your cat grooming herself properly?

Cat Essentials for Maximum Cat and Human Happiness	
Essentials For	Our Doctors' Recommendations
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flea Preventives • Toothpaste & Brush • Petromalt • Lifestage Select® Vitamins
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowls, Feeders, and Waterers • Our Signature Series Cat Food
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deluxe Slumber Ball • Throw for Furniture
Grooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitacoat® Plus

If she has long hair, are you helping prevent mats or dander buildup by brushing her? Is there any hair loss? Is the skin dry or greasy? Does she have external parasites like fleas? Note any lumps and bumps on the skin. Dry skin and coat can be alleviated with an Omega-3 fatty acid enriched product.

Special Nutritional Needs of Cats

- Protein -**
Cats require a high level of [protein](#) in their diets. If dietary protein is insufficient, the cat's body will soon start breaking down the protein in his own muscle.
- Taurine -**
[Taurine](#) is an essential amino acid to cats. If taurine is deficient, heart problems, eye conditions, and reproductive troubles may occur.
- Arginine -**
The only way cats can
- Arachidonic Acid -**
[Arachidonic acid](#) is an essential fatty acid that cats cannot manufacture, so it must be supplemented. Arachidonic acid is necessary for a proper inflammatory response, blood clotting, and reproductive and gastrointestinal function.
- Active form of Vitamin A -**
Cats lack the enzyme that converts beta-carotene to retinol, the active form of [Vitamin A](#). Deficiencies of Vitamin A can cause night blindness, retarded growth, and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush • Nail Trimmer
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cat Trees • Window Perch • Plenty of Cat Toys • Scratching Boards
For You	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet Hair Pic-Up • OdorLogic® CleanAway • Dura-Ruff® Folding Pet Den

get the amino acid ornithine, necessary for the proper breakdown of protein, is to convert it from the amino acid [arginine](#). Arginine deficiency can lead to high ammonia levels in the body. Although deficiencies are rare, they can occur in cats that are not eating or those with certain liver diseases.

skin and haircoat problems.

- **Niacin** - Cats, unlike other species, cannot manufacture [niacin](#) in sufficient quantities, so they need an extra amount in their diet. Niacin deficiencies can lead to weight loss, inflamed gums, and bloody diarrhea.

Note: To ensure your cat gets the above nutrients, feed a premium cat food. [Drs. Foster & Smith Signature Series Cat and Kitten foods](#) contain ideal levels of these required nutrients in a feline palate-pleasing kibble.

Simple At-Home Cat Care Essentials... for Happy, Healthy Living



[Nutritional
Cat Food](#)



[Ear Cleansing
Supplies](#)



[Dental
Supplies](#)



[Catnip
Treats](#)