

CAT TAILS

A Touch of Magic

Dr. Margie receives requests for advice and help from people far and wide. Magic's people contacted her from Winnipeg because of bleeding in her eye associated with uncontrolled hypertension.

While this was controlled for some time, sadly she eventually passed on because of progressing kidney disease. Here is her story.

I just wanted to tell you about how we got Magic. It is a really cute story. We sold all we had and left Winnipeg with our two kids and a 40' sailboat, which we lived on for three years. We got into a marina in Daytona Beach Florida and a cat had just had a litter of kittens. Karen, our daughter, was eight at the time and she decided we should take a kitten with us on our trip. She tried everything to convince her Dad that he did indeed like this kitten. Karen would bring Magic to the boat every day and Larry would send the kid and the cat back saying he did not want a cat on his boat. I said nothing. Finally on the last night of our stay we were down below saying bye to our friends and low and behold there at the top of the companionway stood this little kitten. She proceeded to go down the seven stairs slowly as she was very small and the stairs were big. The kitten then hopped up on the settee and curled up and went to sleep. Everyone stood there and no one said anything. We all looked at Larry, who said: "Well, I guess I have been had. The cat can stay." Thus Magic got her name because she appeared by magic. She sailed with us to South America and through Panama Canal and on up to San Diego

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Dental Disease in the Dark Ages

The cause of feline dental resorptive lesions (FDRLs), also known as feline odontoclastic resorptive lesions, is unknown. This is one of the most common types of dental lesion in cats and has been seen in pet, feral, and exotic cats. On examination, there is loss of dental tissue on the crown or the neck of the tooth, and inflamed, red gingiva are common. Whether this disease is a new disorder of cats related to the "pet cat life style" has been controversial;

however, the answer came quite unexpectedly from an archeological dig in Germany known as the "Shield Excavation." This mapped dig unearthed 1871 feline bones from 181 cats buried in the town market during the 13th and 14th centuries. Seven of 189 mandibles and one of 126 skulls were examined using gross, radiographic, and histologic techniques. Clear evidence of FDRLs was found in three of seven mandibles, and

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Magic on the boom

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Older and Wiser

“My cat’s just getting old and cranky—he bites when we try to pick him up,” or “She’s missing the box because she’s old. We think it’s time to let her go.” I know I’ve heard such comments frequently. It is our responsibility to educate clients that old age is not a disease and definitely not a cause for euthanasia. Most older cats have one or more health concerns, but the good news is that their problems often can be managed or cured.

Inappropriate elimination is a prime example. An older female cat may have a urinary tract infection, difficulty getting into the box because of osteoarthritis or hypokalemia (low potassium levels), a soaked box because of diabetes mellitus, or several other treatable or manageable conditions. A cranky cat may have pain associated with arthritis, dental disease, or pancreatitis. With regular senior care and changes in the home environment to keep the patient comfortable, these cats can continue to be beloved family members and go on to live many more comfortable years.

We need to understand that cats are masters at hiding illness, which is a protective mechanism for survival in the wild. That’s why it’s so important to examine cats, especially cats seven years of age and older, at least twice a year. Preventive healthcare includes obtaining a thorough medical and behavioural history, with a questionnaire that helps identify specific behaviour changes, and performing a comprehensive physical examination and diagnostic testing (blood work, urinalysis and blood pressure measurement), with comparisons with previous test results.

Since a change in behaviour is usually the first sign of underlying health concerns, be sure to call us if you see any changes in behaviour, even subtle ones. This allows for early detection when the



Tamara with senior, Riley

condition is easier to manage or treat. By knowing about signs to look for in older cats, you can enhance the quality, and often the length, of life for your beloved feline friends.

Adapted from an article by Dr. Ilona Rodan. Ilona is the recipient of the 2005 Animal Welfare Award, a past president of the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP), and co-chair of several AAFP guideline panels, including the Panel Report on Feline Senior Care and the AAFP Feline Behavior Guidelines. She is also one of the creators of the “The Great Cat Watch, for Wellness Sake” (www.catwellness.org/). She owns the Cat Care Clinic in Madison, WI. 🐾



Kaylee

Superbugs: Is There a Human- cat Connection?

A common bacterium called *Staphylococcus aureus* lives on the skin and in the nose of people and other animals, usually without consequence. But a certain form, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a “superbug” that is resistant to many commonly used antibiotics.

Some studies indicate that transmission of MRSA between people and pets is possible. A report entitled, “Suspected transmission of MRSA between domestic pets and humans in veterinary clinics and in the household,” is bound to raise concerns among cat lovers. The researchers found the same type of MRSA in five infected dogs and three infected cats as they found in the nasal passages of some of the people in close contact with the infected animals.

Should cat lovers panic? Certainly not. But such studies reinforce the fact that: animals and people can transmit certain infectious diseases (called zoonotic diseases) to one another. The following guidelines will help keep your household free of zoonotic diseases.

Wash your hands before eating and after handling your cat or changing cat boxes, seek immediate veterinary care for sick cats, and prevent cats from licking your face, food utensils, or plates to ensure that, of all the things you share with your cat, bacteria is not one of them. For the full report see:

www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/news/mrsa.htm



**I have studied many philosophers
and many cats. The wisdom of
cats is infinitely superior.**

— Hippolyte Taine

Twenty Years! (Wow...That Went Fast!)

Cats Only opened its doors on September 2, 1986. Margie chose that date in memory of her dad, whose birthday was on that day, because he had been such a cat lover and close friend. It's time to celebrate!

Check in with us during September to learn about the festivities.



CATS ARE BETTER THAN KIDS BECAUSE THEY:

1. Eat less
2. Don't ask for money all the time
3. Are easier to train
4. Might come when they are called
5. Never ask to drive the car
6. Don't hang out with drug-using friends
7. Don't smoke or drink
8. Don't have to buy the latest fashions
9. Don't want to wear your clothes
10. Don't need a gazillion dollars for college, and...
11. If they get pregnant, you can give their children away! 🐾

Feline Trivial Pursuit

Astound Your Friends! Stump Your Acquaintances!

According to the Guinness' World Records...

The largest breeds of domestic cat (*Felis catus*) is the Maine Coon at 15–25 lbs. The smallest is the Singapura (4–6 lbs). The average healthy weight of the adult tomcat is 8.6 lbs, the adult queen is 7.2 lbs with neutered and spayed cats ranging between 7–11 lbs. The heaviest domestic cat on confirmed record, was the Australian neutered male tabby, named, "Himmy," who weighed 46 lb 15.25 oz (21.2 kg)! (Needless to say, his obesity caused him serious, and ultimately fatal, health problems.)

Cats generally live longer than dogs. The average well-cared for, household cat receiving good veterinary care lives 13–17 years. Add another two years if they are altered (spayed or neutered). Some breeds, such as the Siamese have longer life expectancies. The oldest cat on record was a tabby, named "Puss" of Devon, England, who lived to the ripe old age of 36 years!

Cats generally produce 4–5 kittens per litter and have two litters per year. The largest litter on record was produced by a Burmese queen named, "Tarawood Antigone" in Oxon, England. Nineteen kittens (four of whom were stillborn) were delivered by caesarean section. The most prolific cat was "Dusty," a tabby in Texas, USA, who produced 420 kittens during her breeding life.

Four hundred and twenty?! Okay, that's a lot. Let's do the math, taking a less extreme example of four kittens x two litters per year x eleven breeding life years (which is conservative). That's 88 kittens. Each year tens of thousands of cats are killed at Humane Societies and SPCAs because people decide that:

- they have moved and can't find a cat-friendly apartment
- the person's lifestyle has changed
- the cat has undesirable behaviours
- the kids have left home
- they don't want them anymore

Any number of sincere reasons exist. A cat, like a child, is a commitment for life.

Altered States

Unneutered cats (male and female) are more prone to serious health problems. The risk of prostatic and breast cancer can be virtually eliminated by spaying and neutering your cat before he/she reaches one year of age. (Ideally, spay females before their first heat.)

Neutered cats are less likely to wander and therefore are less likely to get into fights and become infected with such things as feline leukemia virus (FeLV), feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), and cold viruses. They are also less prone to develop abscesses, both superficial and deep (eg pyothorax, which is a life-threatening chest infection). They aren't apt to wander and be hit by a car or get trapped in a garage and get lost.

The indoor vs outdoor question is a personal and philosophical choice. Keeping cats indoors protects them from most of the problems mentioned, as well as outdoor poisons (such as antifreeze, garbage and slugbait) and pellet shot. It reduces the exposure to fleas, and thus also to tapeworms.

However, some of us ask if part of being a cat is the joy of sniffing the breeze and chasing a leaf? Recent controversial (*ie* unpopular) voices are heard in the veterinary

community suggesting that some of the common illnesses in cats may be a result of stress and boredom associated with being kept strictly indoors. To learn more about enriching the life of the indoor cat, check out: The Indoor Cat Initiative at www.indoorcat.org

Please. Recognize that a pet *is* for life. Follow the preventative health care program we recommend with an annual or biannual examination, with deworming and vaccination as warranted.

And...enjoy your furry friends! They offer us unconditional love and deserve the same in return. 🐾

A TOUCH OF MAGIC

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and then she went all the way to Winnipeg in a car. Somewhere along the way Magic became my cat as much as I wanted her to be Karen's. Now Karen is 28 and soon having a baby up in Nome, Alaska. This is another reason I could not hydrate Magic everyday as I need to go stay with Karen when the baby arrives. Maybe Magic knew that.

Sharon Dunmall 🐾

"How-to" for Cat Owners

Visit Cornell Feline Health Center's website to view this new online resource for cat owners. If you've ever attempted to pill a cat, trim his/her nails, or take a temperature, you'll understand how difficult it can be. Cat lovers will find detailed instructions on the following topics:

- Giving your cat a pill or capsule
- Giving your cat liquid medicines
- Trimming your cat's claws
- Brushing your cat's teeth

Interesting and informative websites and books to purrruse at your leisure

www.pawsitiveresources.com/main.htm

Pawsitive Resources: strengthening the bond between children and pets.

www.veterinarypartner.com

Information on animal health, medications and surgeries.

www.catage.com/reg/regentry.aspx?cbr=RACA14_P

Determining your cat's age.

www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pro_apcc_toxicplants

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's poisonous plant book.

www.cafepress.com/buy/cat?CMP=NCEF&OVRAW=cat%20vets&OVKEY=cat&OVMTc=advanced

Cat designs on T-shirts and gifts

www.showcatonline.com/posters/artistic.htm

Fine art and posters featuring cats

www.catsthatlooklikehitler.com

Cats that resemble...

Are the products you use being tested on animals? If you truly love animals, please try and make a difference and help stop the companies from harming these innocent and beautiful creatures by NOT using/buying their products!!!

Companies that DO Test on Animals:
www.astrostar.com/DO-Test.htm

NO Animal Testing:

www.astrostar.com/DO-NOT-Test.htm

New reality show.

www.meowmixhouse.com/

Ten cats living in a house together. Each online episode is about 3 minutes long. The cat-estants have engaged in challenges like purr-offs, and feline makeovers. You can also vote for your favourite cat. Besides selling kibble for MM, the show raises awareness about cat adoptions, as all of these cats have been adopted once voted off the show.

Enjoy!

Medication Refills

Occasionally we run into your frustrations regarding medication refills. For reasons of health (and the law), we have to have seen your kitty within the last six months for a physical examination in order to refill a prescription. This ensures that we aren't harming your friend with the wrong medication for his/her current health status, that we can change medications if necessary or adjust the dosage of his/her current medication. The British Columbia Veterinary Medical Association (BCVMA) requires us to have this current Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). It's not only legal, it is logical and good medicine. 🐾

Videos can be played in entirety, or can be viewed in segments to make repeat viewing easy. Bookmark the following link and check back for future topics:

www.felinevideos.vet.cornell.edu

From *Cat Watch*, June 2006 🐾



SPECIALS

OCTOBER: 10% off Royal Canin/Waltham diets

NOVEMBER: 10% off MediCal diets

DECEMBER: 10% off annual exam

JANUARY: 10% off Mature Cat Program

Feline Blood Donors

Here's what you should know about this gift of Life



Blood can be the gift of life not just for us, but also for our cats. “A cat suffering severe injury or trauma may require blood transfusions,” says Marjory Brooks, DVM, internal medicine specialist and co-director of the coagulation section at Cornell University’s Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory.

Other indications for transfusion include surgical complications and anemia caused by autoimmune disease, renal failure, chemotherapy, parasites in the intestinal tract or fleas. “Young kittens are especially at risk for blood-loss anemia caused by flea infestation,” says Dr. Brooks. Cats that need plasma proteins to combat liver disease, clotting problems or rat poisoning may also require a transfusion.

Qualified Donors

One qualification is weight: A donor cat usually weighs from 10 to 12 pounds. “The bigger the cat, the less risk of hypotension (low blood pressure) after donation,” says Dr. Brooks.

Donor cats are screened before they enter a donor program to ensure that they are free of viral diseases such as feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus, and other blood-borne infectious agents such as Hemobartonella or Bartonella. “Before each donation, cats’ temperatures are checked, and they are given a physical exam to make sure they’re healthy,” says Dr. Brooks.

Donors should be indoor cats that are maintained on a flea-control product and free of intestinal parasites. “Males tend to have a higher red-cell count and heavier body weight,” says Dr. Brooks, which means that male cats tend to make better donors than females. Donor cats are usually two to ten years old, with no history of pregnancy or prior transfusion because of possible sensitization to foreign blood cells or proteins.

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You’re My Type

Unlike humans, whose predominant blood type is type O, the vast majority of cats are type A. Type B is less common and type-AB cats (having red cells carrying both antigens) are extremely rare. Type O does not exist among the feline population, and there is no Rh factor as there is in the human population.

Using a donor that is the same breed as a recipient is no guarantee that the blood types will match. “There’s a different proportion of types in different breeds,” says Dr. Brooks. (Approximately half of British shorthair and rex cats are type B while most domestic shorthairs are type A, for example.)

Giving a recipient the wrong blood type can have dire consequences. “Giving type-A blood to a type-B recipient causes acute transfusion reactions,” says Dr. Brooks. “It could be fatal.”

Another complication of blood type incompatibility is neonatal hemolysis (also called neonatal isoerythrolysis), a condition occurring when a type-B queen is bred to a type-A tom. Type-A kittens in the litter are at risk for anemia because their type A cells are destroyed by antibodies present in the queen’s first milk. For this reason, type-B queens should only be bred to type-B toms.

The Process

The procedure takes five to ten minutes, during which time about 50 to 60 mL (about four tablespoons) of blood are taken. Cats must be heavily sedated or anesthetized while giving blood so they remain still. “Most cats aren’t patient enough,” says Dr. Brooks. Sometimes the donor is given fluids to combat hypotension.

Cats should give blood no more than three to four times a year. “If a cat donates too frequently, she can become anemic or iron deficient,” says Dr. Brooks. Otherwise, giving blood has few risks. “A cat might have an adverse reaction to the drug used for sedation,” says Dr. Brooks, “or she might develop hypotension or a bruise or swelling at the blood collection site.” *From Cat Watch, July 2006*

Who Are the Donor Cats?

In Vancouver, our blood donors are your kitties and the program is run out of Vancouver Animal Emergency Clinic. Please check the following site to learn more:

www.animaler.com/donor/blood_donor_faqs.htm 🐾

What's She Up to Now?

Margie's Mews

Dr. Margie has been sticking fairly close to home since the last newsletter.

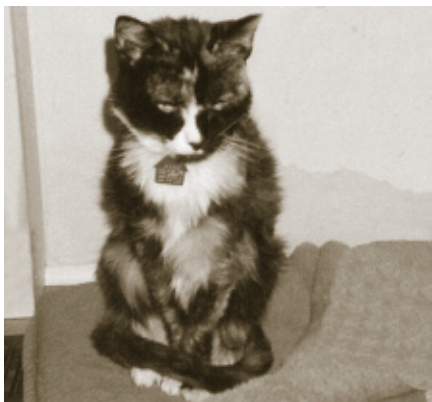
This September sees a trip to Rome to attend the European Society of Feline Medicine meeting and visit the Torre Argentina Cat Sanctuary (www.romancats.com/). She's been working on organizing the program and faculty for the 2007 Feline Institute in Orlando, preparing talks for the American Association of Feline Medicine (AAFP) meeting in Toronto in October at which she will take over the Presidency of the organization. Her goals are to increase awareness within the North American veterinary community of the work that is being done elsewhere in the world and to develop alliances with other feline organizations including the Feline Advisory Bureau and Cat Group of the

United Kingdom (www.fabcats.org/) as well as the Winn Foundation (www.winnfelinehealth.org/), a research group funded by the Cat Fancy in North America. Following this meeting, she will attend a nutrition meeting in Ontario. In November, she'll speak to two veterinary groups on Vancouver Island and participate in evaluating questions for the North America Veterinary Licensing Exam.

Come January, there is a leadership meeting to attend, February brings two days of talks in Virginia, March sees the winter AAFP meeting in Miami, a day or two of presentations in Quebec, and a trip to speak in Australia. She was also invited to speak in Milan, Italy, but sadly that conflicted with the other obligations. Hopefully this invitation will be repeated! 🐾

IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness that we must advise of our clinic cat Jessie's passing. Many of you will remember her as the tiny dark tortoiseshell who would purr like a pigeon. She had such a joy in life and responded in kind to every ounce of love and attention that came her way. We were blessed to have had her in our lives and for her being with us for two years after being diagnosed with severe heart failure. What an amazing spirit she showed.



DENTAL DISEASE

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in one skull. Given that these cats lived over 800 years ago, it seems unlikely that FDRL is a "new" disease.

In this bit of veterinary history, dental resorptive lesions were found in excavated feline bones dating from the 13th and 14th centuries. Aside from the sheer fascination of the findings, medical archeology holds promise in that it may provide clues on the evolution of disorders that affect our domestic animals today. *Bess P. Brosey, MZS, DVM, Diplomate ABVP & ACVIM Clinician's Brief, June 2005* 🐾

BOARDING WELCOME

We'd love to cuddle and care for your kitty while you're away. Book your boarding as early as possible! Space fills up quickly.

MOUSELLANY



Cats Only Hours

Monday, Friday: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday:
9:00 am to 8:00 pm
Saturday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Contact Information

2578 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6J 3J7
Phone: 604-734-CATS (2287)
Fax: 604-734-8011
Email: hypurr@aol.com

Please Call Ahead 🐾

Call ahead for medication refills and to ask us to set aside your kitty's special diet. This will ensure that we have it ready and that you don't make an unnecessary trip if we don't have it in that day!

Our Policy Regarding Emergencies 🌸

We will always make room for the kitties of our existing friends (i.e.: YOU!) first. For emergencies and urgencies call us and we will ask you to drop your cat off to stay with us for observation. That way we will be able to examine him sooner than if you book an appointment.

If the emergency is after hours, or sounds imminently life-threatening, with your kitty's best interests in mind, we'll refer you to the Vancouver Animal Emergency Clinic at the SE corner of 4th Avenue and Fir Street. 604-734-5104.

Are You Moving? 🐟

Please let us know if you and your kitty are moving. It's especially important that we have your correct address and phone number if your friend has a tattoo for identification purposes. So, give us a call and we'll update your file so we can continue providing care for your kitty.