

IN MEMORIAM

So Snowy will Live Forever

Snowy, a beautiful white, short-haired girl had been adopted as a kitten from the SPCA in 1991. By the time she was three, her main health problem was obesity: she was carrying a full 18.9 lbs (8.5 kg)!

She came in at age four, not feeling well, lethargic, febrile, and vomiting. She had swollen lymph nodes, harsh lung sounds and a poor coat and an unusual finding, edema of her chest and neck. She also had dental disease! A heart murmur was detected and ultrasound of her heart (echocardiography) revealed a mitral valve insufficiency that was caused either by dysplasia (malformation) or endocardiosis (valve thickening). Serious stuff. After supportive care and a blood culture to choose the appropriate antibiotics, she made a full recovery!

Last summer, she started having problems with dehydration-induced constipation. Kidney disease (**renal insufficiency**) was diagnosed on blood work and urinalysis. When kidney function declines, cats lose the ability to maintain their hydration despite drinking more, oftentimes a lot more, because they are urinating more than they can drink. For this reason, we ask you to increase dietary water (adding water to canned food, feeding more canned and less dry food) and to give fluids subcutaneously. The fluids you administer by drip go under the skin where the balanced electrolyte solution is absorbed. Chronic dehydration not only results in constipation (smaller, firmer stool, rather than log-shaped stool), but also in lethargy, a decreased appetite, and, if cats are like people, headaches. (Think: hangover!)

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Growing an Edible Garden for Cats

If gardening is one of your leisure activities you may want to grow a garden for your cat to enjoy.

When choosing plants for your cat's garden, choose non-toxic plants. Plants such as catnip, grasses (avoid using grasses from the Graminae species), and dwarf zinnias are plants that can be used for your edible garden. When purchasing seeds, be sure to select chemically untreated seeds. Chemicals such as Thiram and Captan are trans-

ported systematically as the seedling grows. these chemicals are potentially harmful if the cat consumes them when eating the foliage.

After selecting the plants you will use, draw a planting diagram. This insures that adequate growing space is provided and the plants are arranged attractively.

Do not let your cat have access to the garden until it is well established.

Cornell Feline Health Center ❀

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Dental Trivia

1. Are kittens born with teeth?
2. How many teeth does a kitten have?
3. How many teeth does an adult cat have?
4. At what age does a cat get his/her adult teeth?
5. Do cats grind/chew their food?
6. Can a cat survive without teeth?
7. How often do most cats need to have dental hygiene performed?



http://maxshouse.com/feline_nutrition.htm

It is estimated that 85% of cats over the age of six years have periodontal disease. Bacterial toxins and plaque promote inflammation in the gums (gingivitis) which, left unchecked, may progress to irreversible damage to the ligament that holds the tooth in the socket (periodontal ligament) resulting in the loss of the tooth. The teeth often lost first are the tiny incisors at the front of the mouth because their ligaments are short. The areas most severely and painfully affected are at the back of the mouth on top of the jaw. Pull the top lip back and up to see this area. Look for yellow-brown plaque or hard tartar and reddened gums. Ideally we want to keep teeth clean and prevent this from occurring, but by getting on top of it as early as possible will minimize discomfort and potential spread of bacterial infection to other tissues. 🐾

Answers

1. (No.); 2. (26); 3. (30); 4. (4-6 months); 5. (No, they tear it and swallow it as soon as the piece is small enough); 6. (Absolutely); 7. (Every two to three years, but it varies with the individual.)

Removing Cat Odours

The following hints will help you eliminate cat odours safely from the house:

Chlorine bleach neutralizes odours and disinfects litter boxes. Use a dilution of four ounces of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water.

Do not use commercial bleach to clean up urine because ammonia is in urine and may attract repeat offences.

Do not use Lysol™ for disinfecting litter boxes. The chemicals are toxic to cats.

Treat urine-stained carpets immediately with Urine-off™. If the underpad is soiled it must be removed for the treatment is to be effective. If the stain occurs on concrete, clean the surface and then apply sealer to concrete. *Modified From Cornell Feline Health Center* 🐾

The Signs of an Emergency

- Bleeding that does not stop
- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or noisy respiration, a blue tongue
- Inability to urinate, or move bowel, but continues to try, or has bloody stool or urine
- Has painful urination or defecation
- Heatstroke, including heavy panting or extreme weakness
- Loss of balance or consciousness, or seizures including tremours, coma, staggering, convulsions, sudden blindness, tilting of the head, biting at imaginary objects, sudden changes in disposition such as unusual withdrawal or out-of-character aggressiveness
- Pain
- Major trauma, injury or shock from a fall, vehicle accident, wound, cut, broken bone
- Sudden weakness, collapse, shallow breathing, rapid heartbeat, bewildered appearance, dilated pupils
- Any sudden onset eye problem, such as squinting (holding an eyelid shut) or excessive tearing or drainage
- Ingested poison
- Vomiting or diarrhea with blood or violent episodes
- Lameness or difficulty bearing any weight on the leg



Trimming Your Cat's Nails

Using a toe nail clipper, you can cut your kitty's nails with little trouble. Place him/her on your lap and hold one paw firmly. Push on the pad, extend the nails. Examine the nail and find the pink triangle near the base; this is the quick. Turn the clippers sideways so that the nail fits into the opening and cut the nail a mm or so before the pink of the quick. There are five nails on the front paws and four on each back paw in most cats. Once you have finished, praise your kitty and reward with play, catnip or another treat. Trim nails every 6-8 weeks.

DEFINITION

cat (kæt) *n* 1. a lapwarmer with a built-in vibrator. 2. a four-footed allergen. 3. a small, four-legged, fur-bearing extortionist. 4. a small furry lap fungus. 5. a treat-seeking missile. 6. a wildlife control expert. 7. one who sleeps in old, empty pizza boxes. 8. a hair relocation expert. 9. an unprogrammable animal. *From G. J. Leckie* 🐾

Clicker Training

Did you know that your cat could be trained to perform a variety of tricks and tasks? With a clicker and some treats – and a lot of patience – she'll be able to do things you thought were only done in the circus by the big cats, or, by a kitty that belongs to someone else. For example, you can teach your cat to come when called, to fetch and return an object to you, or to sit before it gets petted. Used when the cat does what you want, the clicker, a treat, and lots of praise tell him he's done the right thing. And, your cat's age doesn't matter. According to animal behaviourists there's no reason an older cat can't be taught new tricks.

So, why not try this: hold a morsel of food over your cat's nose and then move it up and back, between his ears. As the cat's nose goes up, his rump goes down. When the rump is down, click and give him food. Given repetition and consistency, your cat will soon learn to sit when you click. *Cornell Feline Health Center* 🐾

Excerpts from "A Cat's Guide to Human Beings"

Why Do We Need Humans? So you've decided to get yourself a human being. In doing so, you've joined the millions of other cats who have acquired these strange and often frustrating creatures. There will be any number of times, during the course of your association with humans, when you will wonder why you have bothered to grace them with your presence. What's so great about humans, anyway? Why not just hang around with other cats? Our greatest philosophers have struggled with this question for centuries, but the answer is actually rather simple: *They have opposable thumbs*. Which makes them the perfect tools for such tasks as opening doors, getting the lids off of cat food cans, changing television stations and other activities that we, despite our other obvious advantages, find difficult to do ourselves. True, chimps, orangutans and lemurs also have opposable thumbs, but they are nowhere as easy to train.

How and When to Get Your Human's Attention. Humans often erroneously assume that there are other, more important activities than taking care of your immediate needs, such as conducting business, spending time with their families or even sleeping. Though this is dreadfully inconvenient, you can make this work to your advantage by pestering your human at the moment it is the busiest. It is usually so flustered that it will do whatever you want it to do, just to get you out of its hair. Not coincidentally, human teenagers follow this same practice. Here are some tried and true methods of getting your human to do what you want. *Sitting on paper*: an oldie but a goodie. If a human has paper in front of it, chances are good it's something they assume is more important than you. They will often offer you a snack to lure you away. Establish your supremacy over this wood pulp product at every opportunity. This practice also works well with computer keyboards, remote controls, car keys and small children. *Waking your human at odd hours*: a cat's "golden time" is between 3:30 and 4:30 in the morning. If you paw at your human's sleeping face during this time, you have a better than even chance that it will get up and, in an incoherent haze, do exactly what you want. You may actually have to scratch deep sleepers to get their attention; remember to vary the scratch site to keep the human from getting suspicious.

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By October, her weight had dropped to a more suitable 13.7 lb (6 kg) but for the wrong reasons. Her appetite had been less than usual for about a week and she hadn't been as energetic as usual. She was definitely drinking more, yet hadn't passed stool for two days. She was very dehydrated, had an ulcer under her tongue, a lumpy left kidney, and, of course, the heart murmur. She was also hypertensive. A cat's

blood pressure is normally 120/80, just like ours. With cats, we measure the systolic pressure more accurately than the diastolic one, *ie*, the first number. Because of stress, in the clinic, the 120

may be as high as 170 before we start thinking about true ***hypertension***. Snowy's was 200. This predisposes to vascular accidents in the eye (blindness) and brain (strokes). Chronic renal disease and hyperthyroidism are the two most common causes of hypertension in cats. This is why we include measurement of the blood pressure in cats over eight or ten years of age when we perform screening blood and urine tests.

Chronic renal disease and hyperthyroidism are the two most common causes of hypertension in cats.

Intravenous fluid therapy was started while awaiting lab results. We also started antacid therapy because of the oral ulcer as these are commonly a reflection of further ulcers in the stomach and esophagus caused by severe kidney failure. Although she appeared stable on that Friday night, Snowy's people felt more comfortable having her observed at the Vancouver Animal Emergency Clinic. There she ran

into trouble associated with balancing severe kidney failure and dehydration (a problem needing more fluids) with her heart disease (a problem where too much fluid overwhelms the capacity to pump

the fluids around the body). She developed edema in her lungs. While this was treated effectively, her kidney function declined so dramatically by Sunday, that this sweet girl, waiting until her people were with her, closed her eyes and died. So sad! And so sudden...

Snowy's people have decided to help other kitties by donating money to the care of other kitties in her name. What a lovely way to remember her.

Thank you, for caring to help. 🐾

Interesting and informative websites and books to purrruse at your leisure

- http://maxshouse.com/feline_nutrition.htm
Fascinating insight into the evolution of feline nutrition.
 - www.thepetprofessor.com/articles/cats.aspx
Pet information on health, nutrition and behaviour; products and forums.
 - www.animalhealthcare.ca/sections5.asp?cat=cats
Animal health care information and advice from Canadian veterinarians.
 - http://cbs2chicago.com/health/local_story_205221428.html
Cats lack the ability to taste sweet! Find out why.
 - www.cathealth.com/
Lots of information and links about caring for your kitty.
 - http://consumer.vetmedcenter.com/consumer/vm_cs_welcome.asp?Page_Type=853
More health and first aid information for your pet.
 - www.vet.cornell.edu/FHC/
or directly at www.felinevideos.vet.cornell.edu/
A series of five helpful videos from the Cornell Feline Health Center.
- Enjoy!

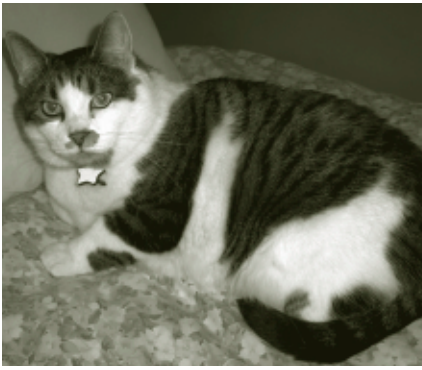
Ten Warning Signs for Hyperthyroidism

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Weight loss | 6. Increased defecation |
| 2. Increased appetite | 7. Increased thirst and urination |
| 3. Hyperactivity | 8. Vomiting |
| 4. Elevated body temperature | 9. Increased vocalization |
| 5. increased heart rate | 10. Matted, unkempt coat |



SPECIALS

MAY: Boarding 7 days for the price of 6
JUNE: 10% off MediCal/Royal Canin diets
JULY: 10% off flea products
AUGUST: 10% off Hill's diets
SEPTEMBER: 15% off dental hygiene



Treo

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!

We'll keep you posted about all the festivities...



Growing Concerns Over Feline Obesity

Just as the human population, there is an “obesity epidemic” in our cats.

“Mrs. Smith, I know you try to keep Fluffy healthy, and one of the best things you could do is control her weight.” Feline diabetes and osteoarthritis are only two results of obesity in cats.

An estimated 40 percent of North American household pets are obese or overweight.

If that estimate is true for cats, it represents a startling increase since 1998, when Cornell’s Dr. Janet Scarlett published her landmark study (*Journal of Nutrition*, Vol. 128, No. 12) titled “Diet and Feline Obesity.” The epidemiologist said at the time that an estimated 20 percent of American cats were too heavy and an additional five percent were downright obese (based on a 1991–92

survey of veterinarian’s patients across the United States. Dr. Margie was part of an expert panel for a feline obesity roundtable in 2005.

If you can’t face your veterinarian and prefer to scare yourself (and your cat) silly, check out the record-breaking felines (among whom 32-pound “Tiddles,” who lived in the Paddington Station ladies lavatory in London, is far from the heaviest) at this website: www.messybeast.com/freak-cats.htm

Or just face the music. Veterinarians are being counseled to help cat owners trim down their pets. Pet food companies are coming up with special formulas. And more veterinary clinics are offering do-it-yourself weigh-ins, available without making an appointment – and without a lecture. *Modified from Cat Watch, January 2006* 🐾

What About Pet Insurance? Is it a Good Idea?

Pet insurance can mean life or death and peace of mind for you. To help you make the best possible insurance decision for yourself and for your cat:

- Look for a company with a history. Some pet insurance companies come and go quickly, so make sure the provider has been around awhile.
- Find out who underwrites the insurance. Does the underwriter have experience in processing pet insurance claims?
- Understand the product before you buy a policy. You will likely have questions about what conditions are covered, the average cost of premiums, and how the insurance works. (Take advantage of free, no-obligations, online quotes.) Can’t find answers on the Website? Call the insurer and ask questions to your heart’s content.
- Ask your veterinarian for his or her recommendations. Many practitioners have first-hand experience with the leading insurers.
- For multi-pet households, find an insurer that provides multiple pet discounts. With VPI, for instance, an owner insuring two or three pets receives a five percent discount on each base medical plan, while four or more pets qualify an owner for ten percent off each base medical plan.

In addition, keep an eye out for the following limitations:

Exclusions. Pre-existing conditions – defined by VPI as any illness, accident, or injury that has been contracted or appeared prior to the effective date of your policy – are

What's She Up to Now?

Margie's Mews

February and March were nice breaks at home for Dr. Margie, but she's back on the speaking and learning circuit again! April includes Seattle, Birmingham, England for the huge British Small Animal Veterinary Association annual meeting where she is a keynote speaker. Dr. Judy Rochette, who is "our" dental specialist, is also an honoured speaker at this meeting. (Let's hope those two ladies stay out of trouble!) After the UK, Margie will participate in a Strategic Planning meeting for the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) in Chicago, speak in Houston, chair, coordinate and participate in the week-long feline intensive meeting in Orlando

at the Post-Graduate Institute and then attend and speak at the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine meeting in Louisville, Kentucky.

In the summer, she hopes to take a couple of weeks off with husband Jim and son Ben as well as to visit daughter Emily in Montreal. But teaching will continue: online for the Veterinary Information Network. Come September, it's off to Rome for the European Society of Feline Medicine meeting, then Toronto to take over the reins as the President of the AAFP at the Fall meeting where she will also speak. Seems to coordinate well with celebrating the 20th anniversary of the opening of Cats Only. 🐾

PET INSURANCE

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common exclusions in pet insurance policies. Other exclusions will depend on the policy you choose. Exclusions can often be covered for an additional cost.

Waiting periods. Be sure to note when policy begins and ends. For instance, one company states that there is a 30-day waiting period on illness from the point of enrollment.

Caps. Be aware of pet insurance limits or "caps" on how much a company will pay for each illness or injury, per animal and per year. Pay attention to annual or lifetime caps.

Finally, before you sign up for insurance, be sure you know the answer to the following questions:

Are prescriptions covered? Are routine veterinary visits (vaccinations, dental care, and flea control) included? Above all, read the fine print to ensure that you buy the peace of mind you desire.

Susan Easterly, From Cat Watch, January 2006 🐾

Check out these providers

www.PetCare.ca

www.vetinsurance.com

www.petplan.com

Also, BCAA, VanCity and London Drugs offer pet health insurance.



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.