



SUBTLE SIGNS OF ILLNESS IN CATS

Cats are generally acknowledged as being masters at hiding the fact that they don't feel good. That's why, as your kitty's caretaker, it's important that you become extremely familiar with your cat's normal appearance, behavior, and routines. This can help you recognize early signs of potential illness which may otherwise go unnoticed until the disease or condition has progressed.

Subtle signs to watch for include:

- **Bad breath.** Malodorous breath and inflamed gum lines can signal a number of oral diseases.
- **Changes in appearance.** Cats are typically fastidious groomers. Unkempt or matted fur can be a sign of metabolic disease or other illness. Cats who overgroom may be displaying signs of anxiety, stress, pain, or skin conditions.
- **Becoming more or less affectionate; hiding.** A cat who is usually very affectionate may begin to sit farther away from you, or find a hiding place. Or a cat who is typically a bit aloof may begin to cling to you. These changes can be signs of disease, fear, or anxiety.
- **Changes in vocalization.** Increased vocalization or yowling may be a sign of an underlying medical condition, pain, or anxiety.
- **Changes in activity level.** An increase or decrease in your kitty's normal activity level may be a sign of a number of metabolic, systemic, or joint diseases.
- **Changes in urine or stool.** Changes in the frequency, color, smell, or volume of your kitty's urine or feces is often an indicator of problems. This can include the presence of parasites or the urgent need for treatment of lower urinary tract disease, which, if left untreated, may lead to blockage of the urethra (a life-threatening condition).

- **Changes in eating or drinking habits.** A decrease in food or water intake can be a sign of several health problems, from dental issues to kidney disease to cancer. And the cessation of eating or drinking can itself lead to serious complications, including liver or kidney compromise. Signs of increased water or food consumption may be a sign of metabolic disease such as hyperthyroidism or inflammatory bowel disease, as well as parasite infection.
- **Unexplained weight gain or loss.** A change in weight does not necessarily correlate with a change in appetite. With certain illnesses, your kitty can lose weight despite a hearty appetite. And obesity is a serious health concern for cats, as it can lead to a number of chronic medical conditions.
- **Changes in sleeping patterns.** Know your kitty's normal sleep routines. If your kitty is sleeping more than usual, or has discomfort laying down or getting up, it may be a sign of underlying disease.

Additional signs of apparent illness include vomiting, diarrhea, sneezing, coughing, gagging, shortness of breath, and wheezing.

If you notice that your cat is displaying any of the signs mentioned above, or any other behavioral or physical changes out of the ordinary, please contact us. Even a small change may turn out to be significant.

HEARTWORM DISEASE—IT'S NOT JUST FOR DOGS

You may think that heartworm disease only affects dogs. However, your cat is also susceptible to heartworm infection.

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquito bites; even indoor kitties are at risk of infection. And in places where there are lots of

mosquitoes, like Sacramento, infection rates can be high.

Soon the rainy season will be behind us, and mosquitoes will begin breeding in puddles and pools of stagnant water throughout our city. If your kitty is not already taking monthly heartworm preventative, please talk with us about which medication is best for him or her.

MAY 22: SAVE THE DATE!

Don't forget to save the date for our third annual Cat's Meow Arts & Crafts Fair, to be held **Sunday, May 22**.

Fair hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in our back parking lot. Please come and browse many unique handmade and artisanal items, including jewelry, beaded purses, quilts, tote bags, aprons, pillows, etched wood jewelry, cat trees, dog clothing, children's books, and much more.

Fairgoers can purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win great prizes, including an autographed picture of Tony Shalhoub (star of the hit show "Monk"), gorgeous cat trees, and many others.

All proceeds will benefit the Sacramento Cat Hospital Foundation Benevolent Fund, which was established in 1989 to provide treatment for injured, sick, and feral cats.

We look forward to seeing you there!

APRIL SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

Through April 30, receive a **free heartworm antibody test** (while supplies last) when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam. Please ask us for additional information.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our staff members.