



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLNESS EXAMS

Feline wellness encompasses every aspect of your kitty's health—overall well-being, vaccinations, dental care, heartworm prevention, flea and tick control, parasite testing and control, and good nutrition.

A regular wellness examination is an important tool for monitoring your kitty's health. Exams provide an opportunity to detect symptoms and prevent diseases in their early stages, or avoid them altogether.

When you and your kitty arrive at the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam, you'll first meet with one of our technicians, who provide nursing support for our feline clients. The technician will ask you to complete a brief health questionnaire and will then weigh your kitty and take his or her temperature. (Weight gain or loss, or a low or high temperature, may be indicators of illness or stress.) The technician may also take a blood pressure reading (which can detect hypertension), trim your kitty's nails, demonstrate how to brush your kitty's teeth, or discuss appropriate diets, treatments, and skills that the doctor has recommended.

After the technician has completed these tasks, the veterinarian will meet with you and the technician to obtain a thorough medical background, discuss the results of the technician's evaluation, and answer any questions you may have about your kitty.

The doctor will then begin a head-to-toe examination, evaluating your kitty's overall presentation and the condition of skin and fur, including the presence of parasites, dander, scabs, wounds, or lumps and bumps (which may need further diagnostics, such as a fine needle aspirate with cytology, or biopsy with histopathology).

The doctor will listen to your kitty's lungs to detect any airway problems (possible indicators of asthma, fluid in chest, allergies), and will also listen to the heart (a heart murmur may indicate heart disease, metabolic disease, bacterial or viral illnesses).

This is followed by a palpation (feeling the abdominal area) to check that organs are of normal size and thickness (irregularities may indicate inflammatory bowel disease, kidney disease, or liver disease). The palpation may also detect lumps or masses in the belly (possible enlarged lymph nodes, abscesses, or cancer).

The ears are examined for any waxy debris or abnormalities (possible wax plugs, infection, parasites). The eyes are evaluated for any pigment changes in the colored part of the eye (possible iritis, uveitis, melanoma). The middle and back of both eyes are examined to assess the vessels and retina (possible cataracts, hypertension, tumors).

The doctor will look inside your kitty's mouth to assess for possible dental disease. Any tartar, plaque, gingivitis, stomatitis, or lesions will be noted.

Once the exam is complete, the doctor will discuss the findings with you, and may recommend further workups based on the results. This can include labwork, blood pressure assessment, x-rays, ultrasound, dental work, or evaluation by a specialist.

Please ask for a copy of our wellness care plan handout for complete recommendations based on your kitty's age.



If your kitty hasn't had a wellness exam in more than a year, please contact us to schedule an appointment. Regular exams can help keep your furry family member healthy and greatly extend his or her life.

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## WINTER CAT CARE

During the cold winter months, when the heater is keeping your home toasty warm, the heated air can cause dry skin not just for you, but for your kitty too. Fur that is normally fluffy may become dull and flat, and you may see flakes under the fur; your kitty may also be scratching more because of dry, itchy skin.

Good grooming habits can help alleviate the symptoms of dry skin. When you spot dander or loose fur, your instinct may be to bathe your cat. However, bathing your cat may actually make the problem worse, as it will remove oils from the skin and fur. Instead, regularly brush your kitty to remove loose hair and dander. Brushing also encourages circulation and will help distribute oils throughout the skin and fur.

Good nutrition is also important. A high-quality diet will improve the condition of your kitty's skin and coat. Nutritional supplements may also help with dry, itchy skin. Please ask us for more information about the diet that is best for your kitty.

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## JANUARY SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through January 31, receive **half off a blood pressure check** when you bring your kitty in for a wellness exam. Please ask us for more 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](http://www.sacramentocathospital.com), or speak with one of our team members.

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