

A N N U A L

Cat Wellness
Examination



Am I as old as you are?

LIFE-STAGE	AGE OF CAT	HUMAN EQUIVALENT
Birth to 6 months	0 month	0–6 months
	2–3 months	9–12 months
	4 months	2–3 years
	6 months	12 years
6 + months to 2 years	6+ months	12+ years
	12 months	15 years
	18 months	21 years
	2 years	24 years
2 + years to 6 years	2+ years	24+ years
	4	32
	6	40
6 + years to 10 years	6+ years	40+ years
	8	48
	10	56
10 + years to 14 years	10 + years	56+ years
	12	64
	14	72
14+ years	14+ years	72+ years
	16	80
	18	88
	20	96
	21	100

Modified from the WellCat log on the Feline Advisory Bureau:
<https://icatcare.org/advice/how-to-tell-your-cats-age-in-human-years/>



Preventive healthcare...saves lives, heartache and money

An ounce of prevention *is* worth a pound of cure. We vaccinate our kitties against many preventable infectious diseases and give them medication to prevent fleas, ticks and worms regularly. This is an excellent foundation for keeping your cat healthy. These actions protect against preventable infections. But, lots of illnesses do not involve viruses or bacteria. Just like people, cats are more predisposed to certain disease conditions at different ages and stages of their lives. And this is where blood pressure evaluation and testing blood and urine comes in. Not only do we run tests when a patient is ill, but we can also often pick up disease before your kitty shows signs of being sick. This lets us step in and help to minimize or cure the disease or, at the very least, reduce the suffering and unnecessary testing. It can also be helpful to have this information before performing a procedure that requires anesthesia.

I know my cat! Won't I know when he's not feeling well?

It can be hard to tell that a cat is sick. It may just be that you notice that "he's just not himself..." In fact, if he (or she) is showing you any alteration from the norm, there probably *IS* something significant going on. Don't second guess yourself.

Cats have evolved as small predators who do not live in groups that take care of each other. Because of their small size, they risk predation by other creatures should they show any vulnerability. They have become "masters of disguise" and pretend that they are fine...until they can't any longer. If a cat is less interactive, hiding himself away, look for a cause! Other cats will become more needy and clingy and "in your face"



when they are not feeling well. How they present will depend on their personality.

Cats are subtle and so are the signs we have to pay attention to in order to know that they need help. These include:

- ◆ Inappropriate elimination
- ◆ Changes in interaction
- ◆ Changes in activity
- ◆ Changes in sleeping habits
- ◆ Changes in food and water consumption
- ◆ Unexplained weight loss or gain
- ◆ Changes in grooming
- ◆ Signs of stress
- ◆ Changes in vocalization
- ◆ Bad breath

The website: <https://haveweseenyourcatlately.com.au/health-and-wellness> provides information about each of these points, click: "Signs of Illness." Cat Healthy also has some great information at: <https://www.cathealthy.ca>. The table on the right shows how cats at different ages are at risk for different conditions. For instance, a young cat is at greater risk for infectious diseases if they haven't been appropriately vaccinated against them, whereas an elderly cat is at greater risk for diabetes or cancer.

Feline Predispositions*

BIRTH TO 6 YEARS

Congenital problems: cleft palate, heart disease, hernias

Infectious diseases:

Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper/Feline Parvovirus/flu), Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP), Colds (Herpesvirus, Calicivirus)

Parasites: fleas, intestinal worms, ear mites and other parasites

Injury from fighting or other trauma

Urinary tract problems: struvite crystals, Idiopathic Cystitis

Behavioural problems

Early dental disease

Obesity

6 + TO 10 YEARS

Obesity

Diabetes

Hyperthyroidism

Hypertension

Urinary tract problems: calcium oxalate stones, early kidney disease

Dental disease

Heart disease

Asthma

Liver disease

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)

Pancreatitis

Early to moderate arthritis

10 + YEARS

Weight loss

Dental disease

Chronic kidney diseases

Urinary tract problems: calcium oxalate stones, kidney or bladder infection

Hyperthyroidism

Heart disease

Hypertension

Diabetes

Cancer

Moderate to severe arthritis

Dehydration and constipation

*Predisposed in, but not restricted to, age group

So, if kitty *isn't* himself today, get him help! Chances are there is something going on and by the time the signs are obvious, his problem may have gone from mild to moderate or even severe.

What are some of the things that blood and urine tests can detect?

All cats should be tested for Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and Immunodeficiency (FIV) viruses as kittens, or when adopted as well as when ill. And, because these viruses are spread by fighting, any time a cat has been bitten, it is advisable to recheck their virus status.

Blood tests will also help to identify other infections as well as inflammation through an altered white cell count on complete blood count (CBC) with the chemistry panel suggesting what part of the body is affected (e.g., liver, kidneys, pancreas,

These are guidelines for healthy cats; if your cat is unwell or has been in an accident/fight, appropriate tests will need to be performed.

thyroid). Additionally, other tests may be suggested to better identify the cause (e.g., diabetes, kidney or bladder infection, heart disease). Urine is “liquid gold” when it comes to evaluating internal health. The information provided by the analysis of a urine specimen goes beyond the urinary system (kidneys and bladder) and complements that found in blood tests. It is extremely helpful to have both blood and urine collected as close to the same time as possible. Additionally, when a cat needs long-term medication for treatment of illness or behaviour problems, it is important to establish baseline values and to monitor if the medication is having any negative effects through follow-up blood testing.

If your companion is healthy and the blood work is all normal — this is excellent news!

At what age should tests be run?

The table below will help you know which tests are warranted based on your cat's age.

AGE	Frequency of Examination and Consultations (including Behaviour and Nutrition)	FeLV and FIV Tests	Blood Tests and Urinalysis
Birth to 6 months	2 or more	✓	+/-
6+ months to 3 years	1	+/-	+/-
3+ to 6 years	1 + blood pressure	+/-	+/-
6+ to 10 years	1–2 + blood pressure	+/-	1
10+ to 14 years	2 + blood pressure	+/-	1–2
14+ years	2 + blood pressure	+/-	2

+/- usually not needed at this age unless cat is ill or has been in an accident

1 recommended once a year 1–2 recommended 1–2/year 2 recommended twice a year

Blood pressure recommendations from Taylor. ISFM Consensus Guidelines on the Diagnosis and Management of Hypertension in Cats. J Feline Med Surg. 2017



An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The merits of an annual physical examination by your veterinarian are extensive— even in an apparently healthy companion.



**Located in Langley,
British Columbia**