



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER

## IMPROVING YOUR CAT'S FITNESS AND NUTRITION

When the new year arrives, many of us join in the time-honored tradition of making a list of resolutions for the upcoming year. Often this includes personal goals for exercise and weight loss.

The new year is also a great time to think about improved fitness and nutrition for your kitty! Cats can face the same health and weight challenges as humans. A kitty's metabolism, food intake volume, and energy output affect not only their weight but their overall body condition.

Excess weight can develop when food intake exceeds energy requirements—in other words, when your cat eats more calories than they expend in a day. How can you tell if your kitty is overweight? A general rule of thumb is, while you shouldn't be able to see your kitty's ribs, you should be able to easily feel them when you put your hands around the ribcage and lightly press. If you can't feel the ribs unless you push harder, your kitty likely has a bit too much padding.

An overweight cat is at risk of developing a number of health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis and joint injuries, liver problems, and heart, thyroid, and other metabolic disorders.

If you think your kitty may be overweight, it's important to have your veterinarian perform a physical examination. Although excess weight is usually related to too much food and too little exercise, there are some medical conditions that can cause weight gain.

If a thorough exam doesn't turn up a medical problem, your vet can work with you to design a gradual weight-loss program just for your feline. Weight-loss programs often

include special veterinary diets. And for the sake of your kitty's health, it's important to avoid feeding them snacks or table scraps, not just during a weight-loss program, but year-round.

Any feline weight-loss program needs to be managed very carefully and only under strict veterinary supervision. Cats have a unique metabolic response to fasting or dieting. When a kitty's food volume is decreased too rapidly, he or she is at risk of developing a serious (and potentially fatal) disorder called Feline Hepatic Lipidosis, also known as fatty liver disease.

To help your kitty get in shape and keep off excess weight, daily physical activity is key. We recommend setting aside 5 to 10 minutes twice daily for special play sessions. A laser pointer, feather wand, or paper or foil balls should get your kitty moving! Interactive toys around the house will encourage your kitty to have a good workout even when you're not home.

Although a successful fitness and nutrition program may require permanent changes to your kitty's diet or exercise routine, their health and quality of life will greatly benefit.



## COLD-WEATHER SAFETY: FAN BELTS AND ANTIFREEZE

The weather is cold and kitties are looking for places to stay warm. Sadly, some animals look to a warm engine to cuddle up with. Please help keep kitties safe during the winter months. Before starting your car, take a moment to thump on your hood to let sleeping cats know it's time to leave. Serious injuries (including burns and fan belt accidents) can be avoided with this one simple action.

If you live in a snowy locale or if you travel to one regularly, you may use antifreeze in

your radiator. Antifreeze poisoning, which is almost always fatal, is one of the most common forms of small animal poisoning. The main ingredient in antifreeze, though highly toxic, offers a tempting aroma and sweet flavor. Poisoning typically occurs when a pet licks up antifreeze that's been spilled or has dripped from a car's radiator.

Always keep antifreeze containers tightly closed and out of reach of animals. Take care not to spill antifreeze, and if you do, clean it up immediately. If your radiator is dripping antifreeze, keep your pets away from the area, clean up drips right away, and repair the radiator as soon as possible. If you suspect that your pet has ingested antifreeze, please call us immediately.



## JANUARY SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

Through January 31, we have two great special offers for you!

First, you'll receive a **free blood pressure check** when you bring your kitty in for a wellness exam.

Second, if your doctor recommends bloodwork for your kitty during the exam, you'll receive **\$25 off the regular price**.

For more information about these special offers, please stop by our front desk.



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