



## FELINE HAIRBALLS

As a kitty parent, you're probably familiar with the "hack-hack-hack" sound of your cat trying to cough up a hairball—and odds are, at one time or another, you've encountered a hairball at night with your bare feet.

Hairballs are not only unpleasant for you, they are a source of discomfort, or worse, for your kitty.

A hairball is formed when your cat swallows fur during grooming. Though most of the fur will pass through your kitty's digestive tract and be excreted in the stool, some fur remains in the stomach. Because hair is not easily digested, it can gradually accumulate, along with digesting food, into a cylindrical mass.

Hairballs are very important to address not only for the comfort of your kitty, but to help decrease medical risk; if a hairball grows large enough, it can cause intestinal blockage, which typically requires surgical removal.

Hairball symptoms can include gagging, dry coughing, or a vomiting reflex; this may be especially noticeable after meals. Kitties with hairball problems may also have lack-luster coats, depression or lethargy, lack of interest in eating (inappetance), or dry stools and constipation.

Fortunately, hairballs are easy to prevent. Begin brushing or combing your kitty at least a few times a week (or daily, if your kitty has a lot of fur). This will remove dead or loose hair that your kitty would otherwise swallow.

Your veterinarian may recommend edible hairball pastes such as Laxatone or Catlax (which provide lubrication to help your kitty pass hairballs), or a prescription hairball diet. Other hairball treatments include dietary supplements (such as certain

vegetables) and veterinary-prescribed fiber capsules or powders, which can help hairballs pass during bowel movements.

Good hydration through increased water intake can also help. Consider purchasing a kitty water fountain, which may encourage your cat to drink more frequently—and remember, never give water to your kitty by syringe in the mouth, as your kitty could aspirate the liquid, causing a more critical condition.

Please speak with us about the best ways to manage your kitty's hairballs.

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## 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.

During a wellness exam, your kitty will receive a head-to-toe examination by your veterinarian, 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. The doctor will listen to your kitty's lungs and heart, and then palpate (examine by touch) the abdominal area to check that organs are of normal size and thickness, and to check for internal lumps or masses. The ears, eyes, and mouth will also be examined, and your kitty's weight and temperature will be taken. Once the wellness exam is complete, the doctor will discuss the findings with you.

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

Regular wellness exams can help keep your furry family member healthy and greatly extend his or her life. If your kitty hasn't had a wellness exam in more than a year, please schedule an appointment. And if your kitty comes in for a wellness exam during the month of July, you'll receive a discount off the regular cost! Please see our special offer below for more details.

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## JULY SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through July 31, **receive a \$25 discount** when your kitty comes to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam!

Please speak with one of our team members 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.