



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

WHY YOUR KITTY'S BLOOD PRESSURE MATTERS

It's important to regularly check your kitty's blood pressure, just like yours is checked. Hypertension (high blood pressure) can be a primary disease, or may be a secondary disease associated with other metabolic disorders such as kidney insufficiency, hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid), or heart disease.

If left untreated, hypertension can lead to serious problems. It can cause retinal detachment of the eye, resulting in acute blindness; cerebral incidents (stroke-like episodes or seizures); and excessive strain on the heart and other body organs.

Possible signs or symptoms of hypertension include dilated pupils, disorientation, head tilt, howling (especially at night), irritability, seizures, or sudden collapse. During physical examination, your veterinarian may find evidence of hypertension in the form of small blood hemorrhages, retinal detachment when looking at the back of the eyes, or a new heart murmur.

Hypertension is diagnosed by measuring blood pressure. A small blood pressure cuff is placed around the kitty's tail or leg to obtain these measurements. We prefer to check blood pressure when the kitty first arrives to keep him or her as stress-free as possible. (Kitties also experience "White Coat Syndrome"!)

We typically take 3-5 blood pressure readings to obtain an average, and to let the kitty get used to the feeling of the cuff on a limb or tail. Sometimes interpretation of the blood pressure readings may be skewed if a kitty is very aggressive or nervous during the check. Taking multiple readings gives

time for the kitty to adapt to this new experience.

Treatment for hypertension typically consists of oral medications that lower blood pressure; these are given in small doses to ensure that blood pressure does not become too low too fast. Sometimes additional medications or special diets may be recommended. If heart disease is suspected or diagnosed, we may also recommend meeting with a board-certified cardiologist to discuss a treatment plan that may best address both the heart disease and hypertension.

We recommend that your kitty's blood pressure be checked each time he or she comes in for a biannual wellness exam. Regular monitoring of blood pressure can help guard against the sudden onset of serious symptoms related to hypertension.

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

We're starting to see signs that our long, wet, and cold winter will soon be behind us. And as the days grow warmer and the sun shines more often, our gardens will burst into bloom.

Lovely as they are, many flowers, if ingested, are poisonous to pets. Some may cause severe illness, and sadly, many can be deadly. Ingesting just a few petals, leaves, seeds, or parts of a bulb can be fatal to pets.

Some of the more common toxic plants include lily, azalea, crocus, hyacinth, tulip, oleander, and daffodil bulbs. Pest balls, fertilizers, blood meal, bone meal, and insecticides can also cause illness or death.

For a more complete list of plants that are toxic to cats, dogs, and horses, please visit www.aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants.

If you suspect your pet has ingested any of these plants, please seek immediate veterinary care. And please help prevent against poisoning by ensuring that your pet does not have access to toxic plants.

FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through February 28, receive a free blood pressure check when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam.

Please ask us for more information or to schedule your appointment.



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