



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 7, ISSUE 6 • JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER

FELINE AGGRESSION

Feline aggression can be scary or unpleasant, not just for the animal or person on the receiving end, but also for the kitty displaying the aggressive behavior. Because cats generally prefer to avoid confrontation, aggressive behavior is always caused by some kind of trigger. Some of the more common types of feline aggression include:

- **Aggression between cats**, a common occurrence when introducing a new pet to your home.
- **Fear aggression**, due to a real or perceived threat.
- **Territorial aggression**, typically directed at other cats but sometimes at other animals or humans, in an attempt to keep them out of the kitty's territory.
- **Petting-induced aggression**, due to overpetting or overstimulation.
- **Pain-induced aggression**, typically triggered by a person or animal touching a painful area.
- **Redirected aggression**, which typically occurs when a cat is agitated by an animal or person he can't get at, such as through a window.
- **Play-related aggression**, typically demonstrating as being a bit too rough when playing with another animal or a human.
- **Maternal aggression** by a mother cat who instinctively tries to protect kittens.

Aggression can be either offensive or defensive. A cat demonstrating offensive aggression will try to appear larger and more intimidating, typically with a stiff, straight-legged

stance, direct stare, raised hackles and puffed-up tail, and growling. A cat demonstrating defensive aggression will try to appear smaller, often with flattened ears, head and tail tucked in, and hissing. If your cat is demonstrating any of these behaviors, do not attempt to touch them. And never punish your cat for demonstrating aggressive behavior. Not only is this ineffective for changing the undesired behavior, it can trigger pain-induced aggression or worsen other aggressive behaviors.

If you regularly notice your kitty acting aggressively, it's important that he or she be examined by your veterinarian to rule out medical conditions that may be triggering the aggression. These conditions may include disease, injury, orthopedic issues, and neurological disorders.

Once medical issues have been ruled out, your veterinarian may recommend treating your cat's aggression with prescription medications designed to help reduce stress. Calming aids may also be recommended, which may include:

- A NurtureCALM collar, which mimics the pheromone that a mother cat produces to calm and reassure her kittens
- VetriScience Composure chews, a calming support formula that helps alleviate stress-related behavior problems
- Feliway spray or diffusers, which use a synthetic copy of the feline facial pheromone to create a state of familiarity and security in the kitty's environment

- Bach Rescue Remedy, a liquid typically applied to paws or added to drinking water, designed to help a pet deal with stressful situations

Depending on the type and frequency of your kitty's aggression, your veterinarian may also recommend working with an experienced feline behavior modification consultant to help identify the underlying cause of the aggressive behavior so corrective steps may be taken.

If your kitty is displaying any signs of aggression, whether directed at another animal or at you, please give us a call at (916) 488-4161 to schedule an exam.

PROTECT YOUR KITTY FROM HEARTWORM DISEASE

Heartworm disease is not just for dogs—kitties are susceptible too. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquito bites; even indoor kitties are at risk of infection. Fortunately, there are several simple ways to protect your kitty from this disease. If your kitty is not already taking monthly heartworm preventative, please talk with us about which medication is best for him or her.

JUNE SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

Through June 30, receive a **10% discount on in-stock feline calming aids** when recommended by your veterinarian following your kitty's wellness exam. Please stop by our front desk for more information or to schedule your appointment.

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, or speak with one of our team members.

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