



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 8, ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER

## FELINE HEART DISEASE

Just as your heart does for you, your kitty's heart pumps blood to different parts of the body, helping organs and muscles function properly. In order to do its job effectively, the heart needs to be in good condition.

Unfortunately, any feline is potentially at risk for heart disease. In some cases, the outward signs will be obvious to the trained eye. Sometimes, though, signs of heart disease are so subtle that they are best spotted by your veterinarian. Regular veterinary checkups are a key component in keeping your cat's heart healthy.

Feline heart disease falls into two broad categories: congenital and acquired.

Congenital disorders are present from birth and are relatively rare. The most common congenital disorders include abnormal heart valve development and holes in the septa (a membrane in the heart).

Acquired disorders make up the majority of feline heart disease. The most common is called *cardiomyopathy*, a structural abnormality in the muscle that encloses one or both heart ventricles. With cardiomyopathy, the walls of the heart thicken and do not pump blood effectively. Over time, this can lead to a number of conditions including high blood pressure, hyperthyroidism, anemia, respiratory distress, and ultimately congestive heart failure.

Signs of heart disease may include difficulty breathing or breathing with the mouth open, coughing that may lead to gagging, weakness or lethargy, inability to walk, swelling in the abdomen, collapsing, or fainting.

If your veterinarian suspects that your kitty may have heart disease, a complete physical exam will be performed, which includes carefully listening to your kitty's heart for murmurs, abnormal sounds between heartbeats, or irregular rhythms. Your kitty's blood pressure will be checked, as hypertension (high blood pressure) may be a secondary condition associated with heart disease. Bloodwork may be recommended to measure cardiac enzyme levels or to check for other conditions such as hyperthyroidism and anemia. In most cases, chest x-rays or cardiac ultrasound will be recommended.

If your kitty is diagnosed with heart disease, there are several medication options which may be prescribed to help manage the disease. Dietary changes and nutritional supplements may also be recommended. Your veterinarian will work with you to develop a plan that is right for your kitty. With early detection and treatment, your kitty should be able to live a healthy, happy life for many years to come.



## FELINE VACCINATIONS

Vaccinating your kitty against the most common and deadly cat diseases is one of the most important ways to keep your cat healthy. A vaccination boosts your kitty's immune system by preparing it to combat a specific disease in the future.

Feline vaccinations fall into two categories: core vaccines (ones that are recommended for most cats), and ancillary vaccines (recommended by a veterinarian only for a small percentage of cats). The Sacramento

Cat Hospital uses only PUREVAX non-adjuvanted vaccines. Many vaccines are adjuvanted, meaning they contain an additive to help the cat's body absorb the vaccine. Unfortunately, adjuvanted vaccines have been shown to cause inflammation or even cancerous tumors at the injection site.

For more information about feline vaccinations or our non-adjuvanted vaccines, or to schedule an appointment for your kitty's vaccination, please stop by our front desk.



## MARCH SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through March 31, receive a **free blood pressure check** when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam! Please stop by our front desk or call us for more information or to schedule your appointment.



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