



Elham Valley Referrals

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CARING FOR YOUR BLIND CAT

Sadly some eye conditions are not amenable to treatment. Your cat may be completely blind or partially sighted/visually impaired. Most cats do adjust well to blindness, especially if vision has been lost gradually. When blindness has occurred suddenly it may take several weeks for an initial panic phase to pass. They will wish to be close to you for comfort and security.

The following are some tips that will make life for your blind cat a lot more enjoyable:

- Always try to be reassuring and try to avoid loud noises or sudden movements. Ask people to talk to your cat gently before approaching them and take extra-special care with children.
- Keep their food, water and litter tray in the same place at all times. It may be a good idea to use a drinking water fountain so that your cat can hear where the bowl is. Try to feed them at the same time each day to help establish a routine.
- Be vocal with your cat. If you want them in a different room or to wake them up, use your voice as this will orientate them to where you are. Use their name and words like "dinner" at feeding time.
- Before you pick up your cat, speak to and stroke them first so they aren't taken by surprise. When placing them back on the ground do so in an area where they can easily re-orientate themselves, such as by their food bowl or in the litter tray.
- Play is still important for blind cats. Use jingly or noisy toys so they know where they are. Using catnip-impregnated toys can also be a good idea as a blind cat relies on its other senses.
- Try to keep the furniture in your home in the same place and do not leave obstacles such as shoes or bags in the way. Ensure there are no potentially dangerous areas such as corners or high steps for your cat to bump in to.
- Try not to stress your cat by placing them in unfamiliar surroundings. Try to get someone to 'house and pet-sit' when you go away rather than placing your cat in an unfamiliar cattery.
- If your cat goes outside then, initially at least, go with them. Do not leave a blind cat outside alone as they may become disorientated and panic. Ensure that they are wearing a safety collar with a tag showing your contact details and their disability in case they escape from your garden.
- Plant cat mint and other scented plants in different areas of the garden to add interest and for your cat can use for orientation.
- If your cat will not go outside then providing an area to sunbathe or get some fresh air is a good idea. Cats can often learn to judge distances and jump onto a surface to be near a window.
- If your cat usually sleeps on your bed bear in mind that if they have suddenly gone blind then getting down will be difficult and your cat could become distressed, and this may result in 'accidents'. Be patient and supervise them until they get the hang of it.

Sudden onset blindness can be very distressing for any animal. Most settle within a few days as they learn to rely more on their other senses e.g. hearing and smell. Providing you take steps to help your cat they should gain in confidence every day. Their quality of life should continue to be good despite the loss of vision. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any worries or questions.