

Cats Need Care Just as Much as Dogs

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THE HIGHLANDER - EXPERT ADVICE

Most of us know how important it is for a cat to go to the vet when it is sick, but what about when the cat seems healthy? Some think that indoor-only cats do not need to get a checkup every year. But recent studies by the [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#) report that many of our feline friends (unlike their canine counterparts) are missing out on veterinary care. This trend is bad news for our feline companions for several reasons.

Regular veterinary examinations can be the most important care your kitty receives. An exam often reveals the first indication of a disease that can be treated early with much success – such as heart disease, obesity and even cancer. Along with the physical exam, vaccines are also important to protect both your individual pet and the overall health of our feline population. Make sure to ask if the vaccines used are specifically designed for cats and are in accordance with AAHA ([American Animal Hospital Association](#)) standards.

With warmer weather, there is yet another great reason to bring your cat to the vet – parasite control. Summer heat offers the ideal environment for fleas, ticks, mosquitoes and other parasites that can make pets sick and anemic. Revolution is a monthly topical treatment that can keep your cat healthy (and your house free of fleas).

Proper nutrition, formulated just for cats, is also vital for good health. Dog food does not contain the nutrients required by cats; felines have a high activity of enzymes in their livers, and need specific amino acids they cannot form on their own. Their diets should also contain specific vitamins and minerals. Your vet can recommend a diet that is best for each stage of your cat's life, as well as prescription diets that assist in the treatment of diabetes, urinary tract infections, obesity, hair balls and gastro-intestinal issues, to name a few.

Finally, annual blood work is a great way for your veterinarian to screen for a multitude of diseases that can affect cats as they age. Cats are adept at hiding illness, but blood work reveals what we cannot see or feel, and can indicate the need for early treatments that often prolong a pet's life for years. [Blood screens](#) can be done at the time of a cat's annual wellness/vaccination visit, with results often available within 24-to-48 hours.

If you haven't visited the vet in a while because your kitty seems stressed out by the idea of it, there are many



things you can do to make the trek more pleasurable. Leave the carrier out for a few days before the visit, and encourage your cat to play in and around it without feeling trapped. Take short trips in the car to build your cat's confidence. Offer cat nip or toys in the crate, and bring your kitty's favorite food or treats to the vet's office so the doc can offer your pet a special reward during the exam. Ask the staff if there are quieter times to schedule your cat's appointment, when the office is less busy. And remember, the more frequently your cat receives veterinary attention, the more comfortable – and healthier – it will be.

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