

Vet's Viewpoint – How Old Is Your Cat?

It is now thought that in human terms a cat develops quickly through their early years and reaches the human age of 24yrs old by the time it is 2 cat years old. Every year after this is the equivalent of 4 human years. Therefore a 16 year old cat is the equivalent of an 80 year old person!!!

Every cat is unique but at each life stage there are typical health problems that are more likely to arise. Kittens may have problems that they are born with and young cats who are adventurers may get into all sorts bumps and scrapes as they explore their world and go off hunting. They definitely need regular deworming and flea control and yearly check-ups to ensure that they are healthy. Obesity peaks in cats aged between six and eight years, so extra care needs to be taken with feeding. Our nurses are more than happy to assist your cat and your family manage your cat's weight. Please make an appointment with a nurse if you are at all concerned with your cat's weight. Being obese can lead to mobility problems and it can also make diabetes more likely to develop.

Mature cats aged between 7-10yrs old are the equivalent of middle aged people in their 40s and 50s and cats aged 11-14 are considered to be senior. The well-loved oldies of 15yrs and over are considered geriatric. Just like people, as they get older there are many changes that happen to their bodies and their behaviour. They are also more prone to some diseases and should be monitored closely. Examples of diseases that might creep up on them are dental disease, diabetes, kidney problems, heart problems and thyroid problems. Signs to watch out for: poor coat condition, vomiting, diarrhoea, reduced appetite or increased appetite, weight loss, drinking more, changes in urination, reduced vision or night-time yowling. All of these signs can be your cat telling you that something isn't quite right, so please make an appointment and bring them up to the surgery for an examination by one of our vets.

How Old Is Your Cat Continued.....

One quick way to help your old cat is to check their claws weekly. Often they grow too long and could curl around and pierce the pads on the feet. OUCH! With some cats regular trimming will be necessary to prevent this and we can train you how to this at home.

Top Tip: Elderly cats are more vulnerable to becoming dehydrated, especially if suffering from medical conditions such as chronic kidney disease. So, to encourage drinking always make sure that a variety of water bowls are available in the home away from the normal places where food is eaten. You may need to experiment with the type of container, for example, most cats prefer ceramic or glass bowls. A drinking fountain is fun for everyone and for some cats you may need to vary the type of water offered, such as tap water, boiled water, filtered, spring etc. We all know that they like to drink rainwater from pots in the garden more than nice clean tap water! It may even be helpful to add a small amount of water to your elderly cat's wet food. Water bowls, like food bowls, may be more comfortably used by the older cat if you raise it off the ground.



Keep in touch with us as your cat ages and we hope to be of service to them from kitten to golden oldies!

Weightwatchers Competition

Don't forget we're now starting our "Launceston's Biggest Loser" pet weight loss competition. Starting throughout June, the nurses will carefully monitor your pet's weight and give responsible advice on their daily exercise and feeding management to help you to reduce your pet's weight. The competition and clinics are free, with prizes to be won for you and your pet. *****WIN! A £25 shopping voucher for you plus a hamper of goodies worth £25 for your pet!*****

Nurse's News – Tortoises

Did you know.....

- *Tortoises inhabit a variety of warm places from deserts to jungles.
- *In the wild, most tortoises have a very short hibernation, as the climate rarely gets too cold. When kept as pets in a cooler climate, hibernation is extended.
- *A tortoise's shell is made up of 60 different bones all connected to each other.
- *The top of a tortoise's shell is called a carapace.
- *The underside is called a plastron.
- *Tortoises have extremely strong mouths but no teeth instead they have horny type beaks.
- *A male tortoise has a longer tail than that of a female, which is one way of sexing them.
- *Tortoise eggs incubate between 90 to 120 days to hatch out.



Fun Corner:

The 10 words to be found in May's "May" wordsearch were:

Maybe, Mayblossom, Mayday, Mayfair, Mayflower, Mayfly, Mayhem, Mayonnaise, Mayor, Maypole.

June Quiz:

June sees the official birthday of the Queen, so here are some questions about the Queen:

- When is the Queen's real birthday?
- What year was she born?
- What are her three first names?
- Which king was her father?
- What date did the queen get married?
- What are the names of their 4 children?
- How many grandchildren does she have?
- What date was her accession to the throne?
- What date was her coronation?

Vaccination Amnesty

Unless properly vaccinated your cat or dog is at risk of contracting one of several, possibly fatal, infectious diseases.

For dogs parvovirus and leptospirosis are the most current and widespread threats, depending on where you live. Both may prove fatal and leptospirosis can present a serious risk to human health as well. Routine vaccinations given to puppies will also protect against hepatitis and distemper, both very dangerous diseases and parainfluenza, which, although rarely fatal, can cause suffering to your dog.

For cats these include feline infectious enteritis, cat flu and feline leukaemia. The risk of contracting a particular disease depends on the lifestyle of the animal. For example, cats in close contact with other cats have a higher risk of becoming infected with feline leukaemia virus.

When your dogs and cats were given their initial course of vaccinations, they were provided with immunity to these diseases. This immunity doesn't last indefinitely and will gradually fall, leaving your pet at risk. Their immunity therefore needs "topping up" at regular intervals.

You may remember that your puppy or kitten was vaccinated twice, with an interval between injections. These two injections were required to ensure a full immune response to all fractions of the vaccine.

After this so-called "primary" vaccination, single annual boosters are sufficient to keep the animal protected. However, if the interval between the initial course and first booster, or between two boosters in subsequent years, significantly runs over, then protection against some of the diseases may no longer be sufficient. In this case, a new primary course with two injections is required.

The vaccination amnesty is a way to get your dog or cat's vaccination status back up to date at minimal cost. During the month of June we will give your pet a complete new primary course for the cost of a single booster vaccination.

Please telephone reception on 01566 772211 to book your pet in and take advantage of this offer, only available during June.