



Scratching Post

From the Kentwood Cat Clinic

Winter 2008

Changing Times – Optimizing Your Cat’s Health

By Dr. Tammy Sadek

The only thing constant in life is change. Fortunately, for our pets, ongoing change has meant a better understanding of their health care needs. New research findings have resulted in changes in how we help our cats stay healthy. The American Association of Feline Practitioners and the American Heartworm Association have released new guidelines for the care of our pet cats. These include:

- 1) All cats benefit from twice(2) yearly exams six months in the life of a cat is equivalent to 3 years for a human, and often health concerns such as dental disease, behavioral problems, allergies and metabolic diseases occur during that time frame.
- 2) Vaccines given are tailored to the cat’s life style. New research shows that many cats are protected for longer than the standard 1 year with the distemper(FCVRP) vaccine, so length of time between these vaccines on adult cats are increasing. The use of non adjuvanted vaccines are also recommended for cats. A small percentage of cats are genetically predisposed to form tumors called sarcomas. Adjuvants are chemicals used to make vaccines more effective. These adjuvants, however, can also be more likely to trigger tumor formation in susceptible cats.
- 3) Wellness testing is needed on a routine basis to find early onset metabolic diseases such as kidney disease, diabetes, and hyperthyroidism. Leukemia/FIV testing is also recommended for sick cats along with indoor/outdoor cats. These diseases are much more effectively treated in the early stages.
- 4) Heartworm preventative is needed monthly all year around. The warm spells that sometimes occur during the winter allow infective mosquito hatches even in Michigan. In addition, new research shows the larval heartworm stages cause permanent lung damage even without adult worms and consequently the larvae must be destroyed by

the heartworm preventative before the damage has time to occur.

To help you keep your cat as healthy as possible in a cost effective manner, we have developed a discount package health plan that follow these guidelines both for adult and senior cats. Please discuss the package with us at your cat’s next visit, or call us at 241-6369 with any questions. And remember we need to see your cat twice a year now!

Further information can be found at the following websites:

www.healthycatsforlife.com
www.knowheartworms.org

Yearly Prepaid Wellness Packages

The Adult Package up to Age 8
Good for 1 Year

2 Exams
Junior Wellness Profile
2 Internal Parasite Exams
Medical Waste Disposal

Cost of \$199.68
Price to You \$180
Also Included
Up to Six nail trims
10% off Heartworm Preventative
10% off Vaccines
\$25 off Dental Procedure

The Senior Package Age 8 and up
Good for 1 Year

2 Exams
2 Baseline Health Panels
2 Blood Pressures
2 Internal Parasite Exams
Eye Pressure Screening
2 Urinalysis
Medical Waste Disposal

Cost of \$461.67
Price to You \$415.50
Also Included



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10% off Heartworm Preventative

10% off Vaccines

\$25 off Dental Procedure



Delicious Dessert Just for Cat Lovers

Nothing spices up a birthday party or other gathering of cat lovers like a Litter Box Cake. It's quick, easy to create, and fun to decorate, so let your imagination run wild!

Ingredients for Litter Box Cake

1 package cake mix, Spice or German Chocolate

1 package white cake mix

2 large packages vanilla instant pudding mix

1 large package vanilla sandwich cookies

green food coloring

12 small Tootsie Rolls™

Serving Accessories

One new plastic cat litter box, washed and dried

One new kitty litter scoop (for decoration only)

Plastic wrap (Saran Wrap™ or similar)

Directions for Assembling the Cake:

Prepare and back the cake mixes as directed, and cool to room temperature.

Prepare the pudding mix; chill

Crumble the sandwich cookies in food processor, a small batch at a time.

Add a few drops of green coloring to 1/4 cup of the cookie crumbs and set aside.

Cut the cooled cakes into bite-sized chunks (about 1 1/2 inches square)

Line the litter pan with plastic wrap, letting the edges drape over, similar to a litter pan liner.

In the new litter pan, layer the cake chunks, cookie crumbs, and chilled pudding mix. Save half the cookie crumbs to sprinkle on top.

Warm three Tootsie Rolls™ in the microwave on a plate until soft. Shape them into a desired shape and set aside. Repeat with three more Tootsie Rolls™. Bury them all in the assembled cake.

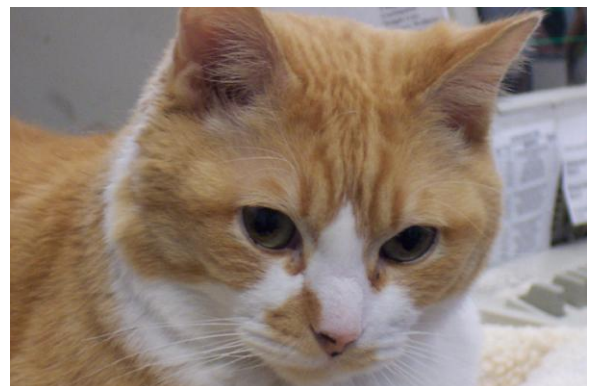
Sprinkle the remaining half of the plain cookie crumbs over the top, then sprinkle the green cookie crumbs on the cake.

As an alternate, you may skip steps 1 and 2, and instead, crumble the cake into a bowl and mix with the prepared pudding. I prefer the firmer texture of the layers, similar to a trifle arrangement.

Decorating Your Litter Box Cake

This is the fun and creative part. Heat 3 or 4 Tootsie Rolls™ in the microwave until they lose their shape. Scrunch them into desired shapes and arrange on top of the cake, sprinkling with a little of the crumbs, if desired. Arrange various sized plastic flies or ants (available in craft stores) on top of the cake. If you want to be totally distasteful, drape a melted Tootsie Roll™ over the edge of the litter box. To serve, place the box on a stack of newspapers, or for a touch of class, on a [Catpaper](#) "doily."

Featured Cat



Memphis



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Continued

Memphis is our resident old guy (this is how we like to affectionately refer to him). He is an orange and white, tiger stripe, Domestic Short Hair; he is now 14 years old. He has been apart of the Kentwood Cat Clinic staff since about 1996. Memphis had been found as a 1 year old stray and the kind folks that rescued him considered keeping him if they did not find any original owners.

What does it mean to live the life of a clinic cat?

A clinic cat must eat food, lounge around the clinic anywhere he pleases i.e. (on the computer keyboard, the chart the doctor is trying to read, the chairs, the desk, the floor right in front of the entryway door so the clients have to step over him.) He also gets to be loved on by everyone and waited on hand and foot by the staff.

Of course sometimes he is called upon to help with the occasional demo for client education; demonstrating how to medicate a cat, or brush its teeth, or how to give subcutaneous fluids. Sometimes a clinic cat is used to teach staff how to do basic procedures such as blood draws, x-rays, placing IV catheters, etc. On very rare occasion they sometimes serve as blood donors for a patient that may need a blood transfusion.

About Memphis I'm not sure how he got his name, but somehow it suits him. He is an extremely laid back cool little guy, but don't underestimate him as he will let you know when enough is enough. I guess you could say he walks softly and carries a big paw. He has recently been given the nickname "MIGHTY BANANA HUNTER" because if there is a banana or banana peel anywhere in the building he will find it. He has literally knocked over trash bins and dug to the bottom. He also has no problem biting directly into an unpeeled banana that someone has brought in for a snack.

As some of you may already know Memphis has a type of cancer called Lymphoma. **Lymphoma** is a type of cancer that originates in lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell in the vertebrate immune system). There are many types of lymphoma. Lymphomas are part of the broad group of diseases called hematological neoplasms. The doctors and staff have been treating him with chemotherapy for his cancer and he is responding very well to the treatment, we cherish everyday we have with him. He is of great help to many of the clients and patients we see.

I Want Your Blood (and other fluids)– - an overview of routine labwork. By June Wolf, LVT

Labwork is one way that we try to see inside your kitty to assess their overall health. Blood and urine can provide important information on how well the body is working. The older our patients get, the more closely we try to track their health. Combined with a complete physical exam and a history from you, we can get a good picture of what is going on inside the kitty.

Complete Blood Count –

This test looks at red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. The red blood cells carry oxygen through the body. A low number here can be from increased loss or decreased ability to make new RBC's. The white blood cells include 5 types of cells. The different cells can be used to fight infection and react to inflammation. A high or low number of a specific type of cell can direct us toward a problem. The platelets help in clotting. If the values are not normal, we may need to give medication or do further testing to identify the underlying problem.

Chemistry –

This is a broad group of tests designed to give an overview of how the organs in the body are functioning. The liver, kidney, pancreas, and intestine are the major players and the tests can help us isolate problems so they can be correctly treated.

Urinalysis –

The urine contains byproducts from many organ systems. The chemical changes can be affected by the kidneys, liver and pancreas. The cellular debris is an indicator for various problems. The ability or inability to concentrate the urine can lead us toward other issues.

Heartworm –

This is a specific test for the exposure of the cat to a parasite. (antibody test). Early diagnosis is critical for successful therapy.



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heart, liver or kidneys! In fact, there is a connection in cats between poor dental health and chronic kidney disease.

Besides causing medical problems, dental disease is one of the leading causes of chronic pain in our cats. Sore teeth hurt—there is no question about it. Sometimes this can be difficult to tell as it is not in the nature of cats to cry or whine about their pain. It is actually more common for them to get less playful and/or grouchy when they hurt. Routine dental care helps to keep them comfortable.

To prevent tartar buildup from leading to long-term problems, routine dental care is essential. This process may need to begin with a professional cleaning. Once the teeth are clean, there are many things you can do at home to help your cat maintain good oral health. Not every

option will work for every cat. Willingness to experiment and try new things is very helpful in helping us to tailor a plan to suite the needs of your individual cat.

Dentistry and oral hygiene is an area of growing concern for our family pets. As good care at home and medical advancements make it more likely for our pet cats to live to an older age, it becomes more important not to overlook dental care as an integral part of the routine care of our feline friends.

Why Do Cats Need Dental Care?

By Dr. Maria Berger

Kittens have 26 temporary (baby) teeth, which start to appear at 2-3 weeks of age. These teeth are replaced by 30 permanent teeth by the time the kitten is 6 months old. Just as people need routine dental care and daily oral hygiene to help their teeth and gums remain healthy, so do our feline friends.

In nature, cats hunt and eat small animals and birds. The ripping and chewing of the stringy meat, gristle and bone is thought to provide natural brushing action for the teeth. Modern feline diets are balanced to provide optimal nutrition for our pets, but most do not provide this natural “tooth-brushing” effect. Imagine not brushing your teeth for several years at a time! It therefore falls to us, the pet caretakers and veterinary team, to provide our cats with good oral hygiene.

Does your cat have bad breath? Does he/she chew on only one side of the mouth or drop food when eating? Are there noticeable yellow, brown or black discolorations on his/her teeth? Is there redness or bleeding of the gums? All these things are symptoms of poor mouth health. Most of these symptoms are related to the production of plaque. Plaque is composed of food debris and bacteria. It commonly combines with chemicals in the saliva to harden into tartar/calculus. This is the yellow and brown crust that many cats have stuck to their teeth. If left untreated, tartar can lead to many problems: cavity formation, abscess formation, localized infection in the gums (periodontal disease), tooth loss, or (believe it or not) infections in the

January is Senior Wellness Month
Ask about our special for a senior
wellness visit and testing

February is Dental Health Month

\$25.00 off Dental Cleanings