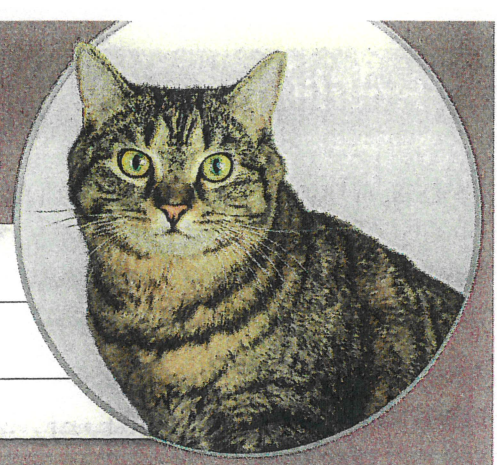


✓ CAT OSTEOARTHRITIS PAIN CHECKLIST



Your Cat's Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Osteoarthritis pain can be a serious health problem for your cat. And cats hide almost everything, especially pain. You know your cat's playful ways and what she loves better than anyone. Changes in these behaviors could be signs of osteoarthritis pain. Your veterinarian relies on you to report changes in your cat's behavior for more accurate diagnoses. If it is found that your cat is showing signs of OA-related pain, helping your cat begins by talking to your vet.

COULD MY CAT HAVE OSTEOARTHRITIS?

This checklist will help your veterinary team identify your cat's activities and behaviors that might be signs of osteoarthritis (OA), a degenerative joint disease that can be painful.

Is your cat showing signs of OA-related pain?

Think about your cat's activity in the past week. Check all of the signs that you've observed in your cat.

JOINT DISEASE

Climbing up stairs: uses 'bunny-hop', with both back legs hopping at same time, and/or stops for a break

JOINT DISEASE

Climbing down stairs: angles body to the side, descends one stair at a time, and/or stops for a break

HEALTHY	JOINT DISEASE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chasing moving objects: slows down or takes breaks during play and/or may have thinner frame near the tail

HEALTHY	JOINT DISEASE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Jumping up: hesitates before jumping up, doesn't clear jumps in one leap, and/or uses arms to pull the legs up

JOINT DISEASE

Jumping down: hesitates before jumping down, makes smaller jumps vs. one big one and/or reaches down towards the ground instead of leaping

HEALTHY	JOINT DISEASE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

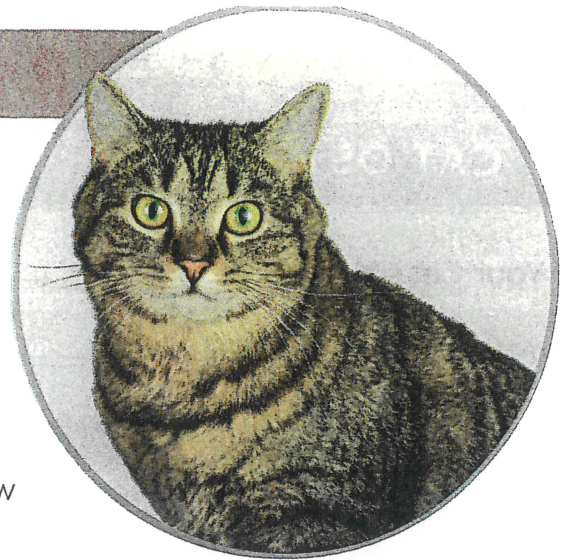
Running: moves at a slower speed and alternates between jogging & walking, and/or back feet angle together

If you checked any of these changes in behavior, your cat may have OA-associated pain.¹ Share these with your veterinarian healthcare team. They will fully evaluate your cat to confirm the diagnosis.



Osteoarthritis has physical and emotional effects

Just as in humans, chronic pain negatively impacts your cat's quality of life, not just physically, but also emotionally. The good news is that by identifying your cat's condition, you and your veterinarian can develop a treatment plan for your cat.

A recent peer-reviewed published study demonstrated the initial validity and reliability of a quality of life assessment for chronic diseases, such as osteoarthritis, in cats.² Using these questions, you can help your veterinarian assess and monitor how well your cat's chronic pain management treatment is working.



Think about your cat's behavior in the past week and help us determine a starting point by completing the following table.

Is your cat...	 My cat couldn't be less				 My cat couldn't be more			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Energetic & Enthusiastic (Vitality)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Active & Comfortable (Comfort)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Happy & Content (Emotional well-being)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

YOUR CAT'S GENERAL BEHAVIOR HISTORY CAN BE HELPFUL

Additional information that can be helpful to your veterinary team is your cat's behavior.

	YES	NO
1. Has your cat's personality and sociability changed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Has your cat's urination or defecation habits changed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Is your cat hiding more or does your cat seem to be "slowing down"?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

OA pain can affect cats of any age, and it has been seen in more than 60% of cats that are 6 years or older.³ If left untreated, the pain can become worse over time. This checklist is designed to help with the recognition of OA pain to help keep your cat happy and active. Your veterinary team will review the results of this checklist with you to identify if your cat might be suffering from OA. This checklist is not a medical diagnostic tool and is not intended to replace discussion with an animal healthcare professional. Discuss medical concerns with your veterinarian.

References: **1.** Based on the Musculoskeletal Pain Screening Checklist (MiPSC) ©2019 North Carolina State University. **2.** Reid J., Nolan A.M., Scott E.M, Measuring pain in dogs and cats using structured behavioural observation, *Vet J.* 2018 June; 236: 72-79. **3.** Slingerland LI et al, Cross-sectional study of the prevalence and clinical features of osteoarthritis in 100 cats, *Vet J.* 2011 Mar;187(3):304-9.

All trademarks are the property of Zoetis Services LLC or a related company or a licensor unless otherwise noted. ©2019 Zoetis Services LLC. All rights reserved. NA-02128.

ZOETIS
PETCARE



EASING OUR CAT'S STRESS AT THE VET

Choose a carrier with entry from the top. A zippered, canvas carrier or a cardboard carrier work best. Provide a familiar toy and blanket in the carrier so your cat has a calming scent from home with him.

Before you need to get your cat into the carrier, place the carrier in a small room that has a door (such as a bathroom) where there is nothing he can get under if he does get away from you. Shut the door when you enter the room so he is contained to 1 room.

Try to remain calm when placing your cat in the carrier as your cat will sense any tension you have. Talk softly and calmly to your cat during the entire veterinary experience- from getting him into the carrier, to the drive to the vet, and even the return drive home. Your calmness will go a long way in helping your cat develop an acceptance to his carrier and, ultimately, his lifetime healthcare at the veterinary clinic.

Elevate the carrier in the waiting room and exam room- place it on a counter, not on the floor. Cats feel more secure when they are up high.

Once in the exam room, transfer the toy and blanket from the carrier to the exam table with your cat.

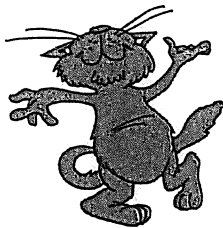
Allow your cat to exit the carrier on his own- don't dump him or pull him out of the carrier. You may need to take the top off the carrier. The veterinary assistant can help you with this if needed.

Allow your cat to go back into his carrier as soon as the vet is done. Place the blanket and toy back in the carrier too for added security.

Bring food and litter from home when your cat is spending the night at the vet.

Ask to be checked out in the exam room to minimize exposure to other animals and unfamiliar sights or sounds.

Tips to re-introduce your cat to other cats in the household: be passive, don't encourage or force cat interaction. Leave the returning cat in the carrier- if no problems after 10 minutes, it is ok to let the returning cat out. If there is aggression, distract the cats to separate them- don't get between them or pick them up. If prior homecomings have led to aggression or if there is a negative reaction to the cat in the carrier, put the returning cat in a different room for at least 24 hours (until the cats consistently respond to food and toy play from both sides of the door). Try bringing the cats to the vet together next time.



The following website provides general feline health information:

Vet.cornell.edu/fhc/health

📍 The Cornell Feline Health Center is closely monitoring the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Here is our most up-to-date information.



Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine

Cornell Feline Health Center

Supporting Cat Health with Information and Health Studies.

[CVM](#) > [Departments, Centers and Institutes](#) > [Cornell Feline Health Center](#) > [Health Information](#) > [Feline Health Topics](#) >

Cognitive Dysfunction

According to the American Pet Products Association (APPA), about 94 million cats currently reside in U.S. homes, up from 85 million in 2016. Much of this impressive increase, no doubt, stems from the pleasure that a growing number of people derive from having a cat around the house. But the dramatic population increase may also be attributed to the fact that cats in general are living longer nowadays than they typically did in the past. As a result of improved home care, better nutrition, advances in veterinary medicine, and so forth, it is not uncommon for a cat to live to the ripe old age of 20 or 21 years—the equivalent of age 96 to 100 in a human.

There's a downside to this good news, however. As cats grow older, they, like humans, become increasingly susceptible to the onset of disorders associated with aging. As the years go by, their organs gradually function less efficiently, for example, and the potency of their immune systems naturally declines. Among the most troubling, and in some respects most baffling, of age-related feline disorders is cognitive dysfunction, a puzzling, progressively debilitating condition whose signs resemble those associated in humans with Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia.

The behavioral signs of cognitive dysfunction tend to become clearly noticeable in cats that are 10 years of age or older. The signs include spatial disorientation; wandering away from home into unfamiliar territory; lack of interest in playing; excessive sleeping; altered cycles of sleep and wakefulness; long periods of staring blankly into space or at walls; indifference to food and water; urinating and defecating outside the litter box; and seemingly unprompted episodes of loud vocalizing, frequently in the middle of the night.

Some of the bizarre behavior may be attributable to the gradual impact of a long-standing physical condition that worsens as a cat grows old or to diseases commonly found in older cats. The pain of arthritis, for example, can intensify over the years and cause a formerly athletic cat to slow down dramatically as the years pass. Kidney failure may impact litter box behavior by causing excessive urination and soiling of the litter box, causing some fastidious cats to find alternative places to eliminate. Arthritis may also hinder a cat's ability to get into the litter box in time. Night-time vocalizing is relatively common in hyperthyroid cats or cats with hypertension, and hypertension can also cause retinal detachment and blindness, leading to anxiety and confusion. Progressively painful periodontal disease can discourage the cat from visiting its food bowl with the same enthusiasm it showed at a younger age.

The signs of cognitive dysfunction may also be traced to a neurologic disorder, according to Alexander de Lahunta, DVM, former emeritus professor of anatomy at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. He explained, "when examining a cat, if it is acting as if it's in a world of its own, doesn't respond to me, paces in a circle, or gets itself in a corner and just stays there, I'll consider that to be a prosencephalon problem." The prosencephalon, he explains, includes the largest portion of the brain, the cerebrum. This area controls a cat's response to its environment, its vision and hearing, and such vital functions as sleeping and eating.

Suggested Articles

[House Soiling](#)

[The Special Needs of the Senior Cat](#)

[Is Your Cat Slowing Down?](#)

[Is It Time to Say Good-Bye?](#)

[Neurological Disorders](#)

Anomalous behavior stemming from that part of the brain, explains Dr. de Lahunta, can be caused by a variety of physical problems, such as tissue inflammation, tumors, trauma, or a metabolic disease. If magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and analysis of cerebrospinal fluid fail to reveal a physical problem in the brain, says Dr. de Lahunta, then the problem is something that is probably best treated by an animal behaviorist or veterinary psychiatrist.

After other potentially causative conditions, such as hyperthyroidism and kidney disease, are ruled out, a veterinarian may prescribe an anti-anxiety drug, such as fluoxetine, to allay some of the alarming signs of cognitive dysfunction. (A drug called L-deprenyl has proved successful in improving brain function in dogs but has not yet been approved for use in cats.)

Animal behaviorists note that cat owners can play a significant role in delaying the progress of feline senility and its accompanying disabilities. Among their suggestions: feed an aging cat a diet rich in vitamin E and antioxidants, substances that are believed to retard the effects of aging; avoid bringing another animal into the household whose presence might be stressful to the cat; and make sure that litter boxes are conveniently accessible, with low sides for easy access. If the elderly cat is having trouble going up and down stairs, provide ramps as needed throughout the house. And be sure to take the cat to a veterinarian for routine checkups so health problems are identified in their early stages, when they are most treatable.

Updated July 2018

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

Careers

[Privacy](#) [Site Feedback](#) [Accessibility](#) [Land Acknowledgement](#) [Cornell University](#) ©2016

GERIATRIC QUESTIONNAIRE ♥



The effects of the natural aging process can slowly take a toll on companion animals. It can be difficult to notice these changes unless you look for specific clues. Since you know your pet better than anyone, you may be best to notice the subtle changes in your pet's behavior, habits, and activities. This checklist will provide your veterinarian a roadmap to help diagnose conditions – many of which can be managed, providing a better quality of life for your pet, even in their advanced age.

Pet's Name: _____ Male | Female
Dog | Cat Breed: _____ Weight (lbs): _____ Age: _____

SLEEP PATTERNS:

How many hours sleep does your pet average per day? _____

Do they have a peaceful sleep throughout the night? YES | NO

If No: Do they get up during the night to (mark all those that apply):

Urinate | Defecate | Drink Water | Pant | Pace | Whine | Bark | Other

HOUSE TRAINING: Has there been...?

increase in urination | urinary accidents | leaking urine where they lay | changes of fecal appearance
 fecal incontinence | awareness of fecal incontinence

If Any: Please explain: _____

EARS/EYES/NOSE/THROAT: Have you noticed...

a change in hearing | change in their bark or meow | meowing/roaning more | coughing more
 a cough that sounds like throat clearing | bad breath | panting more frequently | vision problems

If Vision Problems (mark all those that apply): in bright light | in dim light | at night | up close

SKIN: Have you noticed...

nails longer than normal | itching | shivering | masses | smell bad | licking or chewing body

For Cats: Does your pet still groom him or herself? YES | NO

Is your pet's skin: flaky | dry | oily | unkempt

Does your pet seek out areas that are: hot | cold | soft | sunny | hard

MENTATION: Does your pet do any of the following?

pace during the day | stare off into space | show increased aggression | experience any seizures
 exhibit less interaction with family | act disoriented or distant during the day | show agitation certain times of the day | find themselves stuck in odd locations

How long is your pet left by him or herself during the day? _____

Does your pet have a favorite game? YES | NO

If Yes: Please explain: _____

EATING/DRINKING: Has there been...?

- increase in thirst | weight loss | weight gain

What is the diet your pet is currently on, including treats? _____

MOBILITY: Check all of the following that pertains to your pet?

- needs assistance to get up | dragging feet/toes | change in gait/walk | has difficulty jumping
 must navigate up/down stairs in or outside the home | need assistance climbing stairs

What floor type do you have at home: tile | wood floor laminate | rug | other

What is your pet's exercise schedule? _____

Has this changed in the past year? YES | NO

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS: Please discuss the following items in detail with your veterinarian

Are there other pets in the home – if so – what kind/how old? _____

Are there any major concerns you have? _____

Describe what a good day is like for your pet? _____

List your pet's top 5 favorite things: _____

List 3 things your pet hates: _____

What quality of life do you think your pet has right now (1-10 with 10 being the greatest)? _____

HOW OLD IS YOUR PET IN PEOPLE YEARS?

Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Small Breed / Cats (1-20 lb)	7	13	20	26	33	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96
Medium Breed (20-50 lb)	7	14	21	27	34	42	47	51	56	60	68	69	74	78	83	87	92	96	101	105
Large Breed (50-90 lb)	8	16	24	31	38	45	50	55	61	66	72	77	82	88	93	99	104	109	115	120
X Large Breed (>90 lb)	9	18	26	34	41	49	56	64	71	78	86	93	101	108	115	123	131	139		

Adult
 Senior
 Geriatric

Chart courtesy of Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DABVP.
 The above ages are intended as general guidelines only.

