

# Welcome!

We are an independent, employee-owned, feline-friendly mobile veterinary practice dedicated to caring for your cat in the comfort of their own home. Unlike other practices, most of which are owned by large corporation or private equity firms, The Cat Doctor is not out to make a profit, our sole purpose is to help cats and those who look after them. We treat each of our patients as an individual, and that means managing your cat's unique health needs with a sensible and tailored approach. As a result, some of the ways we do things may be different from what you're used to, so we've created this welcome pack to help introduce ourselves.

At The Cat Doctor, we understand that you know your cat better than anyone else, so we actively encourage you to be involved in their health care. At the same time, we understand that you have more to worry about than your cat's schedule, so we'd like to make it as easy as possible for you. We maintain an extensive reminder system for the care your cat needs and are happy to use whatever form of communication suits you - text, WhatsApp, email, post and/or telephone. If ever you have any questions or concerns, please do get in touch in whichever way you find most convenient although if you have an urgent enquiry, it's always best to ring.

Please note, however, that we are not your average veterinary practice. Instead of trying to be everything to everybody, we leave all the fancy life-saving stuff to our brilliant colleagues at their fully equipped clinics and instead focus on what we feel is equally important but often forgotten - your cat's comfort, happiness and overall wellness. Think of us as your cat's GP, your first contact for most concerns, allowing them to stay at home as much as possible for routine and preventative healthcare. We do not provide emergency or out of hours veterinary care but can help you create a plan should urgent care ever be needed and require all of our patients to remain registered with a local veterinary hospital for when more complex treatment is necessary. If your cat ever becomes suddenly unwell, you are welcome to ring us and we will do our best to advise and assist if appropriate, but if your cat needs care very quickly, or you are unable to get a hold of us, please contact your local clinic immediately for treatment. Further details about our emergency policy can be found on the following pages or on our website [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk).

Our consulting times are also a bit different from what you may be used to. Our standard visits can be booked between 10am and 3pm, Monday to Friday. Visits typically last at least 30 minutes and are booked with a two-hour arrival window (say, we'll be there between 12 and 2pm) to allow for traffic and to prevent any visit from feeling rushed. We'll let you know when we are on our way so you can get on with your day. Our opening hours are 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday and we do our best to answer the phone when it rings during that time, but we don't have a receptionist so if we are driving or with another patient, we may not be able to take your call right away. In this case, please leave us a message and we will return your call as soon as we are able.

Finally, next time you have a moment please have a look around our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk). There's a sizeable collection of relevant and reliable feline-related links covering a variety of topics, along with a bit more about who we are and how we work.

Thanks again for registering with us, we look forward to working with you to provide your cat with a long, healthy and happy life.

Amy, Shreen and Molly



## Provision of urgent care during normal daytime hours:

If your cat is unwell and you're not sure if it is urgent or not, please give us a ring on 07961 154886 and we will do our best to advise and assist if possible. Don't delay if you can't get a hold of us though - if your cat needs urgent care, please contact your local clinic ASAP and they will provide treatment as necessary. If ever your cat does go to the clinic for urgent care, please remind them to forward us a copy of their records so we can incorporate that information into their ongoing treatment plan.

- Maven Veterinary Care (North Cheam)**
  - Telephone: 0208 337 2214
  - Address: 609–613 London Road, North Cheam, Surrey, SM3 9DF
  - Website: [www.mavenvets.co.uk/](http://www.mavenvets.co.uk/)
- Stone Lion Veterinary Hospital (Wimbledon)**
  - Telephone: 020 8946 4228
  - Address: 41 High Street, Wimbledon, London, SW19 5AU
  - Website: [www.goddardvetgroup.co.uk/practice/stone-lion-veterinary-hospital](http://www.goddardvetgroup.co.uk/practice/stone-lion-veterinary-hospital)
- Molesey Veterinary Centre (East Molesey)**
  - Telephone: 0208 979 1384
  - Address: 4 Park Road, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9LE
  - Website: [www.partridgepractices.co.uk/molesey-vets](http://www.partridgepractices.co.uk/molesey-vets)
- Priory Veterinary Surgeons (Tadworth)**
  - Telephone of Tadworth Clinic (daytime): 01737 812496
  - Address of Tadworth Clinic: 11 High Street, Tadworth, KT20 5SD
  - Website: <https://www.prioryvets.co.uk/>

## What is considered urgent care?

Urgent care is required when a health concern can't wait until we (your cat's GP) are next available or perhaps requires more care than can sensibly be provided at home. Please feel free to ring us first but if you cannot get a hold of us, don't delay, contact your local clinic for care (like A&E for humans). This includes:

- Serious injury with bleeding that won't stop\*
- Seizures (that won't stop) or collapse\*
- Non- or minimally-responsive to stimulus\*
- Sudden, severe vomiting or diarrhoea
- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Listless or hiding away
- Eye injuries
- Ingestion of a poison or dangerous object\*
- Hit by a car\*
- Rapid deterioration in quality of life (end of life)
- Severe, sudden lameness or pain
- Unproductive straining to urinate or defecate
- Sudden breathing difficulties
- Bites, stings or allergic reactions

*\* These situations are better dealt with in a fully-equipped clinic so do not wait for us to ring you back, contact your local clinic immediately. For the others, we will do our best to assist if we are available.*

## Transportation:

If your cat needs to go to the clinic and you do not have your own transportation, many taxi companies will take cats in baskets (call ahead of time to make sure) or you can ring a special pet taxi, of which there are at least 2 in our area. The pet taxi driver will usually be able to help you put your cat into their carrier if needed, and you may be able to ride with them - please discuss your requirements when you ring:

- Duty of Care Pet Taxi and Ambulance**
  - Telephone: 07909 966892
  - Website: [www.dutyofcarepetservices.co.uk](http://www.dutyofcarepetservices.co.uk)
- Veterinary Assist Pet Taxi and Ambulance**
  - Telephone: 07961 952 379 or 07940 360 936
  - Website: [www.veterinaryassist.co.uk](http://www.veterinaryassist.co.uk)

## Out of Hours Emergencies:

Should you have an emergency overnight or over the weekend, please ring your local clinic as normal and their voicemail should advise the best course of action. If you're not sure if it is an emergency, ring them anyway and they can advise, or **Vets Now has a separate service for emergency video consultations:** [www.vets-now.com/videovet](http://www.vets-now.com/videovet). Alternatively, here is a list of local emergency clinics that you are welcome to use:

- Veteris Mobile Emergency Services** (providing out of hours home visits for non-life threatening conditions)
  - Telephone: 0203 808 0100
  - Website: [www.veteris.co.uk](http://www.veteris.co.uk)
  - *Important note: Wait times can be too long - if you feel your cat needs to be seen before they are able to get to you, please do not hesitate to use one of the clinics mentioned below instead.*
- Vets Now Sutton (North Cheam)**
  - Telephone: 0208 127 0393
  - Address: 609–613 London Road, North Cheam, SM3 9DF (inside Maven Vets, listed above)
  - Website: [www.vets-now.com/find-an-emergency-vet/sutton/](http://www.vets-now.com/find-an-emergency-vet/sutton/)
- Stone Lion Veterinary Hospital (Wimbledon)**
  - Telephone: 020 8946 4228
  - Address: 41 High Street, Wimbledon, SW19 5AU
  - Website: [www.goddardvetgroup.co.uk/practice/stone-lion-veterinary-hospital](http://www.goddardvetgroup.co.uk/practice/stone-lion-veterinary-hospital)
- North Surrey Veterinary Emergencies (East Molesey)**
  - Telephone: 0208 783 2850
  - Address: 4 Park Road, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9LE
  - Website: [www.partridgepractices.co.uk/north-surrey-emergency-vets/](http://www.partridgepractices.co.uk/north-surrey-emergency-vets/)
- Priory Vets (Reigate) for those already registered with Priory**
  - Telephone: 01737 242190
  - Address: 10 Evesham Road, Reigate, RH2 9DF
  - Website: <https://www.prioryvets.co.uk/>

Finally, we understand how important **end-of life care** is to you and your cat, so we do our very best to provide this care ourselves. However, should your cat require at-home euthanasia urgently and we are not available, you may contact **Cloud 9 Vets** ([cloud9vets.co.uk](http://cloud9vets.co.uk), 08000 354 999) or **Veteris** (see above) out of hours for assistance.

*If you have any questions about what to do in an emergency, please speak with us now so we can come up with a plan together. We recommend keeping a cat carrier ready to go at all times just in case you need it at short notice. It is always best to be prepared!*

# THE CAT DOCTOR



AT-HOME VETERINARY CARE

Have a question about any of our terms?

The Cat Doctor is committed to providing the best possible care to both you and your pet, in a straightforward and stress-free manner. We want to make sure that you're happy with the care your cat receives so we do hope you'll take the time to read the following information. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask!

*For more information about our emergencies policy, opening hours, prices or payments, please visit our website:  
[thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

## Terms and Conditions

The Cat Doctor is NOT a full-service veterinary practice – instead, we manage your cat's day to day healthcare needs with referral to fully-equipped veterinary hospitals if needed. Think of us as your cat's general practitioner (GP), your first point of contact should you have any concerns regarding your cat's health and wellbeing. All clients of The Cat Doctor must also be registered with a local veterinary clinic, who will provide urgent care, hospitalisation and advanced diagnostic testing as needed.

### **Provision of Emergency Veterinary Services:**

As a single-vet practice with no clinic facilities, The Cat Doctor does not provide emergency services. If your cat is seriously ill and required immediate treatment, please ring your veterinary hospital to arrange for this care. If you're not sure whether or not it is an emergency, you are welcome to ring us on 07961 154886 and we will do our best to assist. However, if you are unable to get a hold of us, do not wait, contact your hospital immediately to discuss your cat's condition. In the event of an out-of-hours emergency, the hospital's voicemail should direct you to their provider, or please see our website for a list of local emergency services. You are responsible for providing your own transportation to a clinic if necessary – many taxis will take a cat in a basket, or you can ring Veterinary Assist (a veterinary ambulance service) on 07961 952 379 or 07940 360 936 or Duty of Care Pet Services on 07909 966892.

### **Opening Hours:**

The Cat Doctor's usual opening hours are 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. Our consulting hours are 10-3, M-F. As a single-vet practice, there will be times during the year when The Cat Doctor will be closed. During periods of staff holiday, we will do our best to monitor messages once a day but will be unable to take your call. Should your cat require veterinary treatment while we are closed, please contact your clinic for assistance. Please note that additional charges will apply for any case seen out of hours, so please ask for an estimate when these services are required. Further details are available on our website.

### **Referrals to Local Clinics:**

As a mobile practice, there are some services that we are unable to provide in your own home (such as surgery, hospitalisation and advanced diagnostic tests). Should your cat require these services, we will refer you to your local clinic for care. You will be responsible for getting your cat to their scheduled appointment at the clinic. If you do not own a car, many taxis will take a cat in a basket or you can ring Veterinary Assist (a veterinary ambulance service) on 07961 952 379 or 07940 360 936 or Duty of Care Pet Services on 07909 966892.

### **Fees:**

The Cat Doctor is not out to make a profit – our goal is to run a sustainable business so we can continue to help you and your cats. We are not a charity

however, and receive no outside funding, so we need to make ends meet. Our fees are regularly evaluated and may be adjusted up or down depending on the current costs of providing our service. Veterinary services and products are subject to VAT, and this is included in our listed prices. Payment is accepted via credit/debit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Maestro only) or direct bank transfer. Payment in full is expected at the time our service is provided. For ongoing cases, this may include settling any balance at the end of each day. Written estimates are provided upon request and are valid for 1 month.

### **Prescriptions:**

When your pet requires a medication, we may provide this ourselves or you may be given a written prescription to purchase medications from another veterinary surgeon or pharmacy. You may also request a prescription at any time should you choose to purchase your medications from another source such as an online pharmacy. There is a charge for each written prescription. If you have any concerns about the cost of your pet's medication, please bring this to our attention. Medications not dispensed at the time of a visit may either be posted to you or delivered to you, and a small fee may be charged for this service.

### **Use of Unlicensed Medications:**

In an effort to provide your cat with the best possible care, it is sometimes necessary to use a medication in a way that differs from that listed on the medication's data sheet ('off-license'), or to use a specially prepared unlicensed medication, or to use a medication imported from another country. By accepting treatment by The Cat Doctor, you accept that there may be risks and side effects associated with these (or any) treatments, though every reasonable effort will be made to minimise them. Should your cat be prescribed an off-license medication, we will advise of any common side effects but please feel free to ask if you have any concerns.

### **Client Confidentiality, Ownership of Records and Patient Photographs:**

All patient and client information is held in confidence according to the Data Protection Acts and will not be disclosed except under the following circumstances – when the client provides a confirmed request, when another veterinary surgeon requests it to provide continuity of care, to the court or our agent as part of a legal process, or to an outsourced reminder service for vaccinations or other treatments. Case records and similar documents (including chargeable diagnostic images such as x-rays) are held by and shall remain the property of The Cat Doctor, however we are happy to provide copies and a clinical summary to the owner, another veterinary surgeon, or insurance company at the owner's request. By submitting an insurance claim, you are requesting us to provide a copy of your cat's clinical history to the insurance company. We sometimes take photographs of our patients and/or their medical conditions, and may use these photos for educational or marketing purposes. If you'd rather we didn't photograph your pet, please let us know.

### **Concerns and Complaints:**

We aim to provide every cat and their owner with the best possible care and hope that you are happy with the service you receive. If for any reason you are dissatisfied however, please do not hesitate to address your concerns in writing to Amy Berge DVM MRCVS first so we can try to solve the problem. We want you to be comfortable with your cat's care so if at any point you would like to seek a second opinion, we are happy to forward your cat's records onto whichever veterinary surgeon you choose. No addition or variation of these conditions will bind the practice unless it is specifically agreed in writing and signed by the Practice Principal. No agent or person employed by, or under contract with, the practice has the authority to alter or vary these conditions in any way. By registering with us, you agree to these terms and conditions. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these terms and conditions, please contact us on 07961 154886.

*The Cat Doctor is committed to providing the best possible care to both you and your cat, in a straightforward and stress-free manner. We want to make sure that you're happy with the care your cat receives so if you have any questions or concerns, please ask!*



## Why is this form so important?

We believe that all cats should be vaccinated, but that no cat should be over-vaccinated. Current practice in most practices in the UK (and therefore what you are probably used to) is to vaccinate cats every year but we think this is too often in many cases. This form explains what that means for your cat and why we have chosen to do things a bit differently.

*For more information about infectious disease, vaccination and other feline health issues, check out the feline health section of our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

# Vaccinating Your Cat

Vaccines save lives and prevent unnecessary suffering. They are also very safe, but not entirely without risk (occasional allergic reaction and very rare tumours are possible side effects). We strongly believe that all cats should be vaccinated, but no cat should be over-vaccinated. Therefore, The Cat Doctor has chosen to offer the vaccination schedule published by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA). This highly respected organisation has published their recommendations and forward-thinking vets, including many feline specialists, all over the world have agreed to change the way they vaccinate cats as a result. Therefore:

1. **RCP** (RhinoTracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopaenia) – all cats should have two to three (depending on age) primary vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart followed by a booster vaccination 1 year later, then every 3 years after that. We do, however, recommend a top-up booster 2 weeks before going into cattery if their last vaccine was more than 1 year ago.

2. **FelV** (Feline Leukaemia) – cats at risk (those that go outdoors) should have two to three (depending on age) primary vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart followed by a booster vaccination 1 year later. We do not generally recommend FelV for cats over 2 years of age, especially those that are indoor-only.

The vaccination components listed above can be given as one combined injection (RCPFeLV). Fortunately, the RCP portion (PureVax) has recently achieved a 3-year license so we can safely give these components every 3 years instead of every year as you may be used to. The FelV portion is still only licensed for 1 year, but the chance of picking up this disease is minimal, especially for older cats. Therefore we recommend vaccinating for FelV only up to the age of 1 year according to WSAVA guidelines ([www.wsava.org/guidelines/vaccination-guidelines](http://www.wsava.org/guidelines/vaccination-guidelines)). This should not affect your cat's ability to go to the cattery, but it may be contrary to what your insurance company recommends so please speak with them if you have any concerns about your coverage.

**I have read and understand the above information and, following the initial vaccination course, I have chosen to have my cat vaccinated (please tick):**

- Every three years (appropriate for the average cat)
- Annually (may be appropriate for cats at higher risk)
- Every 7 years (not recommended, but better than nothing)
- I do not want my cat vaccinated at all
- I decline FelV vaccination (appropriate for indoor/older cats)

If you have any questions about vaccinating your cat, please don't hesitate to ask!



## Why is this form so important?

Much like vaccines, we don't like to recommend excessive parasite treatments (again, contrary to what you may hear from many other clinics). Instead, we prefer to tailor your cat's parasite prevention to their individual risk level. Indoor cats often require very little, whereas avid hunters and social butterflies require more regular treatment to avoid picking up and sharing their very unwelcome guests...

*For more information about fleas, worms and other feline health issues, check out the feline health section of our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

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# Flea and Worm Prevention

Nobody likes the thought of their cat having worms or fleas. But the truth is that any cat, no matter how well loved and cared for, is at risk of picking up these parasites.

- **Worms** – these include mostly roundworms and tapeworms, but occasionally hookworms, heartworms and lungworms as well. Worms can cause a variety of health problems including weight loss, vomiting, diarrhoea, anaemia and organ damage, yet often go undetected until severe clinical symptoms develop. They can be tested for using a faecal sample, but most people find it easier to give regular doses of medication to kill any worms that may be present. Some worms can also be zoonotic, which means they can infect people, especially those that are young or have a weak immune system. If you have young children or chronically ill family members, it is particularly important to deworm your cat regularly.
- **Fleas** – although typically thought of as more of a nuisance than a health concern, fleas can cause a variety of health problems including anaemia and severe skin disease, not to mention extreme discomfort and itchiness. Fleas can also transmit tapeworms and a few infectious diseases.
- **Ticks** - some flea preventatives also treat ticks. Most cats don't require tick prevention in the UK as there is very little that they can catch from them. Ticks are unpleasant though, so if you find that your cat is coming home with them, let us know and we will put them on a more appropriate product.

**Worms and fleas are present year-round in the UK.** In fact, we tend to see more fleas in the winter than we do in the summer, as they love central heating as much as we do. Therefore, we recommend that at-risk cats (ie, those that go outdoors, live with other animals that go outdoors, or are frequently exposed to other animals) be on flea and worm treatments all year long. Treating intermittently is not ideal and the products tend to be much less effective this way.

There are many ways to prevent worms and fleas, and different cats/owners will require different protocols. We are happy to work with whatever routine you choose. Unless you have a particular product or protocol in mind, we usually recommend using a spot-on liquid called **Stronghold** (for fleas and roundworms) monthly along with a **Milbemax** tablet (for all worms including tapeworms) given every 6 months.



## What's the best food for your cat?

Probably three mice, two pretty songbirds and one of your neighbour's garden pond fish.

Because if left to their own devices, that's that they would eat. But as that seems to be frowned upon these days, we recommend you go with a high quality, complete and balanced wet cat food.

*For more information about nutrition and other feline health issues, check out the feline health section of our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

# Feeding Your Cat

When planning your cat's menu, bear in mind these two fundamental principles:

1. **Cats are carnivores.** They are built to eat meat and only meat, not cereals and grains. Carbohydrates such as wheat, corn and rice won't necessarily do them harm (though the jury is still out on that) but they certainly don't need them and they're put into cat foods simply to bulk them up cheaply and to make them easier for humans to feed.

2. **Cats don't drink very much.** And they're not very good at remembering to do it when they should. Not taking in enough liquids is a big problem with cats on standard dry food diets and this can exacerbate many significant health problems such as kidney disease and cystitis (inflammation of the bladder) among others. Contrary to what you might think, cats who drink a lot on dry food are actually more likely to be dehydrated because their needs are almost always greater than their intake.

Therefore, the best foods for cats tend to be those with both a high meat content (and thus a low grain content) and a high moisture content. **In other words, a high-quality wet food.** We recommend either an exclusively wet or a mostly wet food diet for cats. About 80% wet food and 20% dry food maximum is a good general rule and ensures that they get a balanced diet and are used to eating a variety of flavours and textures. That said, we realise that not everyone wants to feed their cat wet food. You're not a bad person if you feed your cat a good quality dry diet and chances are they'll be fine on it, just be aware that research says that wet is better. And yes, we need to look after their teeth too, but there are much better ways to do that than your average cat biscuit.

We don't believe in selling you one particular food brand (though if you need help choosing, please ask) because there are lots of good foods out there and everyone's situation is different. Besides, nothing says you have to stick to just one! So instead, we've compiled a list of foods for healthy cats that generally fit the recommendations stated above, although there are many more that we don't have space to list). If your local pet shop doesn't stock what you're looking for, look online as in fact, some of the newer high-quality brands are only available online. If you struggle to find something appropriate, let us know and we'll see if we can help.

Whatever you choose to feed your cat, make sure that the majority of it states that it is a complete and balanced food for cats (oddly, this mostly applies to the higher quality wet foods, as many are so natural that they are not complete, hence the need to supplement with other foods), and bear in mind that **when it comes to pet food, you generally get what you pay for.** If in doubt, look at the ingredient list and compare to one of the high-quality foods listed below. If you have any questions, please ask! And no matter what you decide on, always make sure your cat has access to fresh water, even if they never seem to drink it (that's usually a good sign).



## Fresh Foods

Because they're incredibly difficult to balance with the correct levels of vitamins and minerals, we generally do NOT recommend an entirely homemade diet for cats. Thankfully, there are now companies out there who will do all the hard work for you, creating high quality, complete and balanced fresh meat foods, frozen for easy storage at home. They'll even deliver it right to your door on a regular schedule, so you never run out!

Because they are very gently cooked, fresh foods maintain more of their nutrients than more highly processed wet and dry foods, but don't carry the hygiene risks of raw diets. One of the best we've seen so far, with locally sourced meats too, is **KatKin** ([katkin.club](https://katkin.club)), although others are likely to follow so watch this space. It is pricey, but a very good food and they tailor the portions to your cat's individual needs.

If that still isn't natural enough for you, then there are now also some high-quality, balanced raw diets available. These can be a good choice if your cat seems to respond poorly to other foods (ie, chronic skin or GI problems). Brands include **Bella & Duke**, **Natural Instinct**, and **Purrform** among others. They do carry a higher risk of parasites or other infectious diseases however, and proper handling is essential.

## Wet Foods

If fresh foods aren't for you, there are many high-quality, more traditional wet foods to choose from. These are some that we think have done a good job trying to get it right. Read the label carefully and if it says it is 'complementary' diet, you need to feed it alongside a complete and balanced other food.

**Thrive**

**Natures Menu**

**Meowing Heads**

**Little Big Paws**

**Forthglade**

**Canagan**

**The Cheshire Cat's Garden**

**Almo nature** (check label, many are complementary)

**Applaws** (check label, many are complementary)

**Encore** (check label, many are complementary)

Less expensive, lower meat content but still better than average foods:

**Royal Canin**

**Wainwrights**

**Hi Life 'Tempt Me' range**

**Republic of Cats** (some of their foods are better than others, check the ingredients)

**Hill's (Science Plan)**

**Feline Fayre**

**James Wellbeloved** (if they'll eat it)

## Dry Foods

If you do want to feed dry food as part of your cat's diet, try to choose one with a high meat and low carbohydrate content (NOTE – 'grain-free' does not necessarily mean high meat! Cats don't eat sweet potatoes in the wild either...). There's a lot of rubbish out there, so read the label carefully. Dry food is usually complete.

**Thrive**

**Orijen**

**Encore**

**Almo Nature**

**Canagan**

**Applaws**

**Lily's Kitchen**

**Meowing Heads**

The average dry food will NOT clean your cat's teeth...

Contrary to what many educated and well-meaning individuals may have said in the past, the average dry cat food does not clean your cat's teeth any more than a carrot cleans yours.

*For more information about infectious disease, vaccination and other feline health issues, check out the feline health section of our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

## Caring for Your Cat's Teeth

When it comes to your cat's teeth, it can sometimes help to compare them to your own. Broken teeth, for example, hurt. Gingivitis (inflamed gums) causes a sore mouth. Sugary foods encourage plaque buildup and the best way to remove it is by brushing regularly. Some people are genetically programmed to have better teeth than others. These well-known human dental facts also apply to cats. The difference, however, is that cats are far less likely to complain about it because if you're a cat, you assume you just have to deal with things like dental disease. But it doesn't have to be that way. There are several things you can do to keep your cat's mouth healthy and prevent them from suffering in silence.

So, what is the best way to prevent dental disease in cats? The best answer is probably whatever your cat will tolerate. There is unfortunately no one magic solution that works for all cats all the time but here are a list of things that you might like to try:

1. **Brushing their teeth daily** – Ok, this probably isn't going to work for most cats, and that includes my own cats so don't feel bad if it isn't a sensible option for you. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the abrasive action of a toothbrush and toothpaste is the best way to remove dental tartar so if you'd like to give it a try, just let us know and we'd be more than happy to advise, we have a handout that we are happy to share.
2. **Dental diets such as Hill's t/d** – the exception to the 'dry food doesn't really help your cat's teeth' rule, these special diets are designed not to break until they reach the gum line, thus providing mechanical cleaning action as your cat eats. We recommend that these diets be used as a supplement or treat alongside your cat's current diet, not fed as the main diet, as they are high in fat and at the end of the day they are still a dry food and this can cause cats any number of other problems.
3. **Raw chicken wings** – yes, you read that correctly, raw chicken wings. Never cooked, as this can result in the bones splintering into dangerous sharp pieces, but cats have been eating raw meat and bones for as long as cats have roamed the earth; think of it as nature's toothbrush. Any food carries some risk and raw chicken wings are no exception, however complications are very rare and the potential benefits are significant. Make sure the meat is fresh (or previously frozen and thawed) and you trust the source and be sure to offer it in an area that is easy to clean and disinfect after they have finished. It's not for every cat (or every owner!) and their tummies may require a bit of a transition period as it is very different from dry food, but for those that do accept it not only is it good for the teeth, it also acts as an excellent protein source and gives them something fun to do too.
4. **Enzymatic gels** - Logic oral hygiene gel is a useful product that you can smear on the outer surfaces of the teeth using just your finger. The gel acts as a surfactant which ensures that the active ingredients remain in

contact with the teeth and gums. It helps the body's natural defences fight harmful bacteria in the mouth and contains mild abrasives which help break down plaque. They say they can even help if licked off the paw although this is less likely to be effective.

5. **Regular dental checks** – I cannot stress this one enough, because unless we're looking, we'll never know if your cat's teeth are healthy or not. Cats usually won't come up to you and tell you that their mouth hurts, and chances are it won't affect their ability to eat. We humans can get away with not eating when we have a toothache because we know the dentist will sort it out in the morning – a cat's natural instinct with all pain including dental pain is to just accept it and move on.
  - a. Try to take a look at your cat's teeth every once in a while by just lifting their upper lip (don't try to open the mouth fully). The more you do it, the more they will learn to tolerate it and the better you'll get at seeing any problems if they do occur. If you have any concerns, let us know.
  - b. In addition to your own checks, during your cat's routine annual health check we will examine the mouth and teeth, giving us a chance to detect dental disease early and treat as necessary. If we think your cat would benefit from a dental cleaning, we will let you know.
2. **Dental cleanings** – a short and generally painless procedure, just as your own teeth are cleaned by the hygienist, except performed under general anaesthesia (because let's face it, when was the last time your cat opened his mouth on command?). The above dental care recommendations will all help keep your cat's teeth cleaner and if your cat has been blessed with good dental genes, may even mean that they never need a professional cleaning. Most cats, however, will require a cleaning at least once during their lifetime and some may need several over their lifetime. The jury is still out as to whether or not routine cleanings (ie to PREVENT tartar buildup) are beneficial to cats, so until we hear convincing evidence otherwise, we will only recommend this procedure if we feel it will increase the quality of your cat's life by reducing the discomfort of existing disease.
  - a. If done regularly and in good time, this is a relatively straightforward procedure. If delayed, there is a higher chance of your cat developing irreversible disease that requires extraction of the affected teeth. This not only increases the length and cost of the procedure, but also results in more discomfort for the cat (though not as much as leaving the damaged teeth untreated).
  - b. Age is not generally a good reason to avoid a dental procedure (though any anaesthetic procedure does involve some risk), as dental disease itself can have harmful effects on the rest of the body including the kidneys and heart which can affect their overall health and comfort levels. In fact, many owners of older cats who have had dental treatment remark that the procedure has brought them back to the cat they were several years ago. If you have concerns about putting your older cat under anaesthesia, a full physical exam and blood test can be done before the procedure to ensure that they are fit enough for the anaesthetic.

*If you have any questions about the above information, or if you want to start a preventative dental healthcare routine but aren't sure where to start, please give us a ring on 07961 154886 and we'd be more than happy to help you find a treatment plan that suits both you and your cat.*



Regular health checks and preventative care are the best way to maintain good health

There is so much you can do to keep your feline friend happy and healthy right now, to minimise their risk of becoming ill or uncomfortable and maximise their enjoyment of life.

*For more information about feline health issues, check out our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

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# Wellness Plans

As your cat's general practitioner, we not only treat illness, but also aim to prevent it from occurring in the first place whenever possible. At The Cat Doctor, we take a holistic and proactive approach to your cat's health and happiness – in other words, we focus on their overall wellness.

Cats are masters of hiding signs of illness and pain, which means that even the most observant owners often don't realise there is a problem until the condition is quite advanced. Therefore, by far the best way to maintain wellness in cats is to thoroughly examine them (both physically and with regards to their happiness/anxiety levels) regularly and, as they get older, to perform regular screening tests such as blood, urine and blood pressure testing. If we aren't actively looking for problems, we might not spot them until it's too late.

We also appreciate that veterinary care is expensive, now more than ever. By having your cat seen regularly however, you not only gain peace of mind but also may end up spending less on their care overall by treating small problems before they become bigger, more costly ones. To help both you and your cats therefore, we now offer the option of spreading their routine preventative care costs over 12 months with our wellness plans.

## What's included in each plan?

As a general rule, we recommend all cats are seen AT LEAST once a year by the vet and 6 months later by the nurse. At each visit we will perform a physical examination and discuss life stage-appropriate aspects of their care, making any necessary recommendations including vaccinations (we don't generally advise vaccination every year and have taken this into account in pricing the plans), medications and further screening tests if needed. As we will be with your cat in their own environment, we can also advise on how best to support them at home. Finally, we include telephone/video consultations in our plans at no charge for extra peace of mind – we want to encourage you to let us know if you have any concerns not just at our visits but throughout the year so we can address them before they become more serious.

Plan members also receive the added benefit of postage and prescriptions (to purchase medication from an online pharmacy) free of charge.

## Which plan is right for my cat?

We will tell you when your cat needs to move up a stage based on their age and overall health, but as a general rule, we would recommend:

- Young Cat Wellness Plan – suitable for kittens, juniors, adults and most mature cats (up to the age of approximately 10 years old)
- Senior Wellness Plan – suitable for some mature and most senior cats (over the age of approximately 10 years old)
- Some senior and most geriatric cats (approximately over the age of 15) may need additional care – please speak with us if you would like to discuss a more comprehensive plan for your cat

You don't have to choose the plan associated with your cat's age however, you are welcome to sign an older cat up for a young cat plan and pay for all screening tests separately for example.

Features	Young Cat	Senior Cat
Vet Check	✓	✓
Nurse Check	✓	✓
Vaccination	✓	✓
Prescriptions*	✓	✓
Postage/Delivery*	✓	✓
Video Consultations*	✓	✓
Blood Pressure		✓
Urine Test		✓
Blood Test		✓
Price (per month)	£14	£33

\* = unlimited, as appropriate

You don't have to choose the plan associated with your cat's age however, you are welcome to sign an older cat up for a young cat plan and pay for all screening tests separately for example.

**Please note, wellness plans are not pet insurance.** Pet insurance covers your cat when they are ill whereas wellness plans cover the routine preventative care and screening tests that insurance generally won't pay for. Pet insurance and wellness plans usually work hand in hand to ensure your cat is covered for life, but there is occasionally some overlap so if your cat is insured, please speak with us before signing up for a wellness plan to make sure it is the right option for you.

We will do our best to remind you when your cat's next checkup is due, however we cannot be held responsible for care that is missed if you choose not to book a visit and no refunds will be given for plan items not used. If you don't feel you will benefit from the features of a wellness plan, please do not sign up for one.

Wellness plans are not mandatory, however we highly recommend all cats are cared for according to the life stage recommendations that the plans are based on. In our experience, cats who receive regular veterinary care throughout their lives are happier, healthier and more comfortable as they get older and we want all of our patients to benefit from that. We offer the plans to make things easier for you in terms of spreading the cost automatically over 12 months and to help you ensure nothing gets missed when it comes to your cat's care.

**If you have any questions about wellness plans, please don't hesitate to ask!**

# THE CAT DOCTOR



AT-HOME VETERINARY CARE

Hold on, you're actually telling me to go buy my pet's medications cheaper online?

Absolutely. If your cat is on a long-term medication (for example, Stronghold, Thyronorm, Onsior or Amodip among others), you could make considerable savings by purchasing these drugs online instead of having us send them to you. Not all online suppliers are reputable though –Pet Drugs Online is our favourite because their website is very easy to use and they are a VMD accredited retailer so we know their products are safe. If you would prefer to use a different site, however, that's fine, just ask us for a written prescription.

*For more information about feline health issues, check out our website at [www.thecatdoctor.co.uk](http://www.thecatdoctor.co.uk)*

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## Purchasing Medications Online

When purchasing medications online from **Pet Drugs Online**, please use the following instructions as a guide:

- 1) Visit [www.petdrugsonline.co.uk](http://www.petdrugsonline.co.uk) or, if you prefer, ring them on **01761 603141** and register yourself and your pet(s). If you are unsure of your cat's approximate weight just give us a ring/text/email.
- 2) Once you are signed in, go ahead and select your products just as you would at any other online shopping site. Please make sure you choose the correct product (ie, for cats, not dogs) at the appropriate dose (based on weight or as stated on our previously prescribed product) and in the appropriate quantity (for example, a 6 pack of Stronghold, not a 3 pack) using the drop down menu as required. If you have any questions about what to order, please ask!
- 3) Once you have added all of your products, review your basket and begin the checkout process. Assign each product to the correct pet when asked to do so, adding any new pets as required. When it asks you for a prescription, you can either:
  - a. Upload the prescription that we have already sent you by email, or
  - b. Choose 'Send Prescription Later'. Give the prescription a name (anything is fine) and select 'Send by Email' **If you use this option, you MUST forward us your order confirmation email so we can send in the prescription on your behalf.** If you do not email us, we won't know to send in the prescription. We will normally issue the prescription within 48 hours but please let us know if your order is more urgent.
- 4) Choose your shipping and payment options to complete your order. Shipping options range from free second class post (for larger orders) to next day courier delivery so choose whichever options suits your needs.

### Please note:

- We charge a fee of £14 per cat per medication for all prescriptions that we send in, with the exception of Milbemax/Profender which is just £2 per cat when ordered at the same time as another product. We will send you a separate invoice for this fee.
- Your prescription is only valid for 6 months, make sure you order as many of your allowed refills as you require before it expires. After 6 months, a new prescription will be required.
- We are in no way affiliated with Pet Drugs Online and are not responsible for anything beyond the prescription we send them.