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## Why You Need to Visit the Veterinarian

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As a member of the family, your cat deserves the very best possible care. One of the best ways to ensure your cat stays healthy is by making sure they have an annual preventive care check-up, or more frequently for senior cats and those with chronic conditions.

During the check-up, your veterinarian will review your cat's nutrition, lifestyle, environmental enrichment (key resources such as food, water, litter box, scratching areas, play areas, resting areas, etc.), disease and parasite prevention, and behavior. This is also the perfect time for you to ask questions and share any changes in your cat's behavior. Even very minor changes could be a sign of a medical issue.

With a thorough physical exam plus the information you share, you and your veterinarian can create a plan to meet the individualized needs of your cat. Regular check-ups are key to a healthy and happy cat.

Here are the top 5 reasons routine veterinary visits are a vital part in helping your cat live a long, healthy life:

Life stage	Age of cat	Human equivalent
 Kitten both to 6 months old	0 – 1 month	0 – 1 year
	2 – 3 months	2 – 4 years
	4 months 6 months	6 – 8 years 10 years
 Junior 7 months to 13 years old	7 months	12 years
	12 months	15 years
	18 months 2 years	21 years 24 years
 Prime 3 years to 6 years old	3	28
	4	32
	5	36
	6	40
 Mature 7 years to 10 years old	7	44
	8	48
	9	52
	10	56
 Senior 11 years to 14 years old	11	60
	12	64
	13	68
	14	72
 Geriatric 15 years old	15	76
	16	80
	17	84
	18	88
	19	92
	20	96
	21	100
	22	104
	23	108
	24	112
25	116	

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### 1. Cats Age Much More Rapidly Than Humans.

A cat reaches the approximate human age of 15 by his first birthday and then the approximate human age of 24 by his second birthday. Each year after, your cat ages approximately 4 “cat years” for every calendar year. So your 8-year-old cat would be 48 in human years. [Annual veterinary care](#) is crucial because a lot can happen in a “cat year”.

## **2. Cats Are Masters at Hiding Illness.**

Cats are excellent at [hiding signs that they are sick](#) or in [pain](#). Your cat could develop a health condition before you notice anything is wrong. Veterinarians are trained to spot changes or abnormalities and detect many problems before they advance or become more difficult to treat.

## **3. Your Cat May Be Overweight.**

Over 50% of cats are overweight or [obese](#). Your veterinarian will check your cat's weight at each visit and provide nutritional and enrichment recommendations to help keep your cat at an ideal weight. Just an extra three pounds can put your cat at risk for diabetes; heart, respiratory, and kidney disease, and more.

## **4. Preventive Care Is Better Than Reactive Care.**

During a regular check-up you share information with your veterinarian about how your cat behaves at home. This history along with a thorough physical examination, allows you and your veterinarian to create a plan to help your cat remain healthy. Regular [check-ups](#) can help avoid medical emergencies by detecting conditions or diseases before they become significant, painful, or more costly to treat.

## **5. Kittens Have 26 Teeth, While Adult Cats Have 30.**

That equals a lot of dental care! [Periodontal disease](#) is considered the most common disease in cats three years of age and older. Often there aren't any obvious signs of dental disease. Most cats with dental disease still eat without a noticeable change in appetite. Discuss your cat's teeth at their annual check-up.

Find a **Cat Friendly Practice**<sup>®</sup> near you. You are an important member of your cat's healthcare team. You can help your cat live a happy and healthy life.



Created by the American Association of Feline Practitioners

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