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## Hello, Pet Parents!

Welcome to the April 2019 issue of the Furkids Newsletter. In this issue:

March Welcome Waggin'

- \* Did You Know?
- \* Let's Celebrate!
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**Please feel free to share the information to friends and family, it is easy to subscribe. Just click on the link at the bottom!**

If you have any thoughts of products you believe improve life for yourself or your furkids, please send me a note! It may be featured in an upcoming newsletter.

And...any spelling & mishaps are mine! I apologize ahead of time if I missed any, I try to catch them. I can only see half words due to my partial blindness (Homonymous Hemianopia), so I might miss some. Amy



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### February Welcome Waggin'

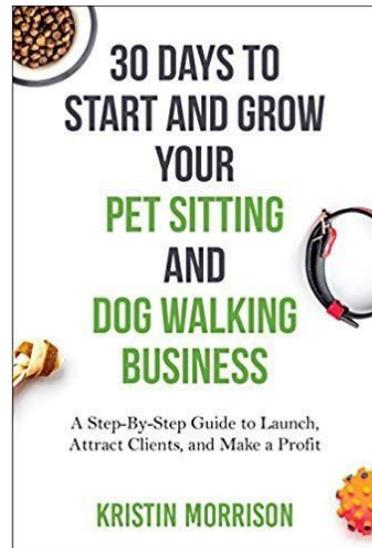
Please welcome to the Furkids family - Fela, Sookie, Colbert, Wyatt, Isis and Satsuma!>

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### Did You Know?

Furkid Sitting and Services owner Amy Sparrow is active in the pet sitting industry. Not only does she participate in a variety of business-specific forums,

she mentors other small pet sitters and is quoted a few times in one of the leading books on the industry.



## Celebrate This Month!

According to NationalCalendarDay.com, The Month of April recognizes these days:

- 2 - National Ferret Day
- 10 - National Farm Animals Day
- 11 - National Pet Day
- 23 - National Lost Dogs Awareness Day

- 26 - National Kids and Pets Day
- 26 - National Help a Horse Day
- 26 - National Hairball Awareness Day
- 28 - National Pet Parents Day
- April 14-20 - National Pet ID Week
- April is National Canine Fitness Month

## 5 Senior Cat Health Problems

**Early diagnosis and treatment for your senior can bring relief, manage pain and slow disease progression.**

Ellyce Rothrock | Mar 28th 2019

### 1. Arthritis

Osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease occurs when cartilage between the bones at a joint deteriorates and becomes less flexible, causing pain and inflammation. Joints naturally degenerate as part of the aging process, but



arthritis also can develop due to joint injury, dislocation or infection. Cats are king when it comes to hiding pain of any kind, but those suffering from arthritis may show overall stiffness, joint swelling, decreased activity and flexibility, and other subtle behavioral changes.

Owners are less likely to report signs of their cats' pain until the cat quits using the litter box or doing other normal activities like jumping. Decreased grooming is a big sign that a cat is in pain.

## **2. Cancer**

Cats don't suffer cancer at the same rate as dogs, but when they do, it's usually a more aggressive form. The most common are lymphoma, oral squamous carcinoma and soft tissue sarcoma. Other less common cancers include brain, liver, lung and nasal tumors.

Because cats are so good at hiding pain and disease, knowing something is wrong can be tricky. Lumps, bumps, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, refusal to eat, weight loss and more can signal a problem. Take your cat to your veterinarian if your pet is acting ill or lethargic for any period. Cancer treatment in cats isn't all that different from treatment for humans. Masses are removed via surgery, lymphomas are treated with chemotherapy and hard-to-reach tumors, such as brain and nasal tumors, are treated with radiation therapy.

## **3. Hyperthyroidism**

According to the Animal Health Foundation, feline hyperthyroidism is the No. 1 endocrine disorder of aging cats. Senior cats with an overactive thyroid gland and excess thyroid hormone suffer from increased metabolism, weight loss despite increased appetite, high blood pressure and, if left untreated, wasting.

Because it's so common among senior cats, standard wellness guidelines recommend screening for it annually once a cat reaches 7 years of age. Signs of hyperthyroidism are weight loss, increased appetite, increased thirst and urination, and possibly vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity and a messy, matted or greasy coat. Early detection is key to successfully managing this disease.

Dietary therapy, medication, radioactive iodine therapy and surgery are the four treatment options open to cats with hyperthyroidism, according to veterinary experts at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. Some studies suggest that in some hyperthyroid cats, limiting the amount of iodine in the diet may be a viable treatment. This is somewhat controversial because of concerns about its effects on overall health and the possibility that it may actually worsen hyperthyroidism. Research is ongoing.

Antithyroid medication administered daily orally or via a topically applied gel reduces thyroid hormone production. Lifelong treatment is required. Radioactive iodine therapy via injection is the treatment of choice for cats with hyperthyroidism — when and where it's available. Only those facilities specially licensed to handle radioisotopes are permitted to administer this therapy. During treatment, the emitted radiation absorbed into the bloodstream destroys the

abnormal thyroid tissue without damaging surrounding tissues. According to Cornell, the majority of cats treated with radioactive iodine have normal hormone levels within one to two weeks of treatment. This therapy most often cures the disease, has no serious side effects and does not require anesthesia, but until its radiation level has fallen to within acceptable limits, a treated cat must remain hospitalized, usually between three and five days post-treatment. In cases where radioactive iodine therapy is not successful, the treatment can be repeated. Surgery to remove the thyroid glands is straightforward and usually produces a long-term or permanent cure in most cats, eliminating the need for long-term medication. However, it means anesthesia, and added risks to older cats with additional health issues. As other treatments are just as effective but less invasive, surgery is not the most popular option. Hyperthyroid cats generally enjoy good prognoses with appropriate therapy, However, because thyroid hormones affect nearly all of the organs in the body, thyroid disease often causes secondary problems that can worsen prognosis.

#### **4. Kidney Disease**

Many senior cats are afflicted with kidney insufficiency or disease, which is the persistent loss of kidney function over time. However, if diagnosed early and treated properly, cats can continue to live a normal life.

Veterinarians should actively look for cats entering the kidney insufficiency/disease stage by ordering a senior blood panel for cat patients 10 and older. The importance of screening and early diagnosis cannot be overstated, as it is associated with longer survival.

Knowing your cat has chronic kidney disease encourages greater monitoring at home, more frequent veterinary visits and greater compliance, which help slow the disease's progression. There is no cure for chronic kidney disease, but treatment can improve and prolong cats' lives. According to Cornell, therapies focus on minimizing the buildup of toxic waste products in the bloodstream, supporting appropriate nutrition, decreasing urinary protein loss, controlling blood pressure, addressing anemia and maintaining hydration.

Therapeutic diets are an important treatment cornerstone, according to Cornell. Some studies suggest that diets restricted in protein, phosphorus and sodium and are high in fiber, water-soluble vitamins and antioxidants may prolong and improve quality of life. But cats, notoriously finicky eaters, might not accept a therapeutic diet, so owners must be patient and persistent in transitioning foods, and ensure their cat keeps eating.

High blood pressure is usually controlled with medication, anemia may undergo red blood cell production stimulation therapy, and urinary protein loss may be treated with angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors to slow progression of the disease.

#### **5. Sensory Loss**

Just as with senior humans, hearing loss in senior cats is mostly degenerative;

deafness occurs from nerve and ear system damage. Rule out ear obstructions, such as impacted wax or a mass, before diagnosing degenerative hearing loss. Signs of deafness may include meowing loudly, failure to respond when called, sleeping very soundly, not hearing an owner approach and not responding to everyday sounds that normally would get a hearty response, like opening a food can or treat bag.

Deafness is progressive and irreversible, and cats with hearing loss are at increased risk, especially outdoors.

In most cases, early diagnosis and treatment can keep a cat from losing his eyesight, but it's important to ensure cats get regular checkups. Most of the cats have an eye disease as a primary disorder, and most of them are middle-aged or senior cats whose vision loss has been progressing for years.

Cats with vision impairment or loss experience cataracts, a clouding of the lens; glaucoma, excessive fluid pressure within the eyeball that causes it to harden; progressive retinal atrophy, where retinal tissue loses its ability to function properly; and a variety of tumors.

Two of the diseases mentioned previously — hyperthyroidism and kidney disease — can cause retinal detachment, one of the most common blindness-causing disorders in cats. Retinal detachment occurs when the retina becomes separated from its underlying tissue, resulting from a leakage or too much fluid between the layers.

As is the case with virtually all types of feline health problems, the earlier a cat's vision impairment is diagnosed, whether the result of disease or injury, the better it may be treated. If you suspect your senior cat is suffering, don't delay — schedule an appointment with your veterinarian and share your observations.

Blood panels and other diagnostic tools can pinpoint the problem, possibly lead to an early diagnosis of age-related disease and get down to the important business of treating and managing it for the health of your feline best friend.

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## **Chase Us!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) . If you like us and care to leave a review on Google or Facebook, we would appreciate it! If you don't like us, well....call Amy first. :-)

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**As always, kiss those babies for me  
Amy - Furkid Sitting & Services, LLC**

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