

## FELINE SENIOR WELLNESS PROGRAM

Most of us don't need a medical checkup more than once a year. But cats are different. Adult cats may age up to **seven times faster than humans**. Because cats age rapidly, major health changes can occur in as little as three months. The risks of cancer, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, heart disease, liver disease and other serious conditions all increase with age. Because today's cats are living longer than ever, chances are many will experience a potentially serious illness during their lifetime.

**Twice yearly** wellness exams can help us diagnose, treat or even prevent problems before they become life threatening. They're also a great opportunity to ask us about nutrition, behavior and other issues that can affect older pets.



**These are our recommendations for diagnostic testing for your senior cat:**

- Senior Wellness Exam**
- CBC / Chem25 / Electrolytes**
- Thyroid Profile**
- Cystocentesis with Complete Urinalysis**
- Blood Pressure Measurement**
- Intra-Ocular Pressure Measurement**

**Senior Physical Exam:** a complete examination, with special attention to areas that may be affected by age, such as the teeth and gums, eyes, skin and coat, heart and lungs, bones and joints. We will also note and evaluate any new lumps and bumps that appear between exams.

**CBC / Chem 25 / Electrolytes:** a set of tests that allow us to evaluate the internal organs, blood cells and electrolytes. A healthy appearing cat may be hiding symptoms of a disease or ailment. Testing helps us pick up problems before symptoms occur.

**Thyroid Profile** an important screening test for hyperthyroidism. Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common conditions we see in senior cats, causing weight loss, heart failure, hypertension and blindness if not treated promptly.

**Urinalysis:** not only indicates how well the kidneys are functioning, but also may reveal evidence of such conditions as Diabetes mellitus and liver disease, among others.

**Blood pressure:** As subtle as the signs of hypertension are in humans, they are much harder to pick up in cats until the damage is done to internal organs like the eyes, heart and kidneys. Most cases of hypertension in cats are secondary to either hyperthyroidism or kidney disease, but some cases do not seem to have an underlying cause. Years ago hypertension was not even recognized in cats, but now we have the ability to diagnose and treat it before harm is done. It is a good idea to have a baseline measurement at about 6 to 7 years of age, for comparison later in life.

**Intra-ocular pressure:** Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in cats. It is usually secondary to hyperthyroidism, but primary glaucoma has been described in cats. Unfortunately, by the time you can see there is a problem, the vision in that eye is lost. By checking intraocular pressure, we can screen for and treat mild increases before they have a chance to become serious.