



# The Scoop

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Happy Spring!

May 2016

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## Black Widow Spiders in Michigan; Bite Can be Fatal to Cats

Black Widow spiders live in all states except Alaska. In Michigan, the Northern Black Widow can be found anywhere in the state. The spiders often live around buildings and can be found outside or inside. They often inhabit corners and nooks and crannies where cats like to play.

**Cats that are bitten by a Black Widow often face a poor prognosis unless they get immediate treatment after a bite.** Young and older cats, as well as those with high blood pressure, face increased risk.

A Black Widow bite can be difficult to diagnose. Symptoms can be serious and include:

- Paralysis
- Abdominal rigidity
- Severe muscle pain in the back, chest and abdomen
- Howling and loud vocalizations
- Muscle tremors and cramping
- Trouble breathing
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Inability to stand
- Excessive salivation and restlessness
- Vomiting (possibly containing the spider)
- Diarrhea
- Death, if anti-venom is not given quickly



*Female Black Widow spiders have a red hour-glass shaped figure on her back.*

**If you suspect that your cat has been bitten, get him or her to the veterinarian immediately.** Your vet will want to do a complete blood profile, urinalysis and physical exam. If possible, take a sample of your cat's stool and / or vomit which will help your vet make a quicker diagnosis.

**The Brown Recluse spider is also a threat to cats and their bite can be fatal. While they are not as common as Black Widows, the Brown Recluse can also be found in Michigan.**

### May is Older Americans Month

## Increase Kitties' Comfort as They Age

Today, cats are living 20 years and more. And just like humans, as they age, cats face the same physical changes.

Cats are considered "[senior](#)" by age 9 and "[geriatric](#)" by age 14. If you have a cat who is approaching his or her "golden years," consider how you can make life more comfortable while keeping kitty active.

- Place litter boxes on all levels of the home for easy access.
- Provide stools / stairs to help cats get up onto their favorite spots.
- Brush / comb them often to prevent matting in hard to reach areas.
- Give joint supplements like Glucosamine and Chondroitin to help support healthy joints.



### Watch for Signs of Arthritis Pain in Your Cat

Closely observe your older kitty for signs of arthritis pain, which might include:

- Hesitation before jumping
- Licking joints
- Difficulty grooming
- Intolerance for being picked up
- Taking longer to get up after a nap or difficulty finding a comfortable position

If you notice any of the above, see your veterinarian who might prescribe pain medications to make your kitty more comfortable. NEVER give your cat human pain medications.

## News and Events:

### See Our New Archive of Cat's Meow Tips

Each issue of The Scoop brings you creative and thoughtful ideas to help you best care for your kitty. See ALL of these tips archived at <http://thecatpracticepc.com/catsmeowtips.html>

### Kitty Camp

Cats staying in our Kitty Camp get frequent attention and plenty of play and exercise in our Kitty Playroom. Consider boarding your cat while you're away, have guests or are having work done at home. Go to [thecatpracticepc.com/boarding.html](http://thecatpracticepc.com/boarding.html) or call 248-540-3390.



### Important Contact information:

**The Cat Practice Hospice and End of Life Care.** Contact hospice nurse Laura Kramek for a consultation at 248-540-3390.

**Nurse hotline.** Get answers to questions about your kitty's health. Email: [Nursehotline@Thecatpracticepc.com](mailto:Nursehotline@Thecatpracticepc.com)

**AARC wellness exam savings** for senior cats. Go to [thecatpracticepc.com/aarc.htm](http://thecatpracticepc.com/aarc.htm)

**Adoptable cats and kittens.** Visit our lobby and [Facebook page](#).

**Story ideas for The Scoop.** Contact [larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com](mailto:larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com)

## Fish Flavored Cat Food May be a Factor in Feline Hyperthyroidism

A new study in Japan-- as reported on by the American Animal Hospital Association -- suggests that cats that eat a lot of cat food containing fish may be more prone to hyperthyroidism. (See full story at <http://www.aaha.org/>)



The possible link may be the amount of environmental pollutants that cats are exposed to as a result of diets high in fish content. Researchers are not sure. There's a lot of good research looking at pet nutrition these days, but it's important to note that research is ongoing and oftentimes, studies contradict each other.

So in the mean time, moderation is key. Find the flavors that your cat(s) like and give them a variety!

### Signs of Feline Hyperthyroidism:

Watch for these signs of hyperthyroidism in your cat. If you observe any one of them, contact your veterinarian.

- A voracious appetite
- Weight loss
- Increased drinking and urination
- Hyperactivity

[Read more about thyroid disease in cats on our website.](#)

## Cat Lover Vacation Dilemma: Take Kitty Along, Board or Kitty Sitter?

It's that time of year again when cat families are faced with the same vacation dilemma. Do we take kitty with us? Do we board him or her at a boarding facility or at the vet? Or, do we find a good kitty sitter to come over while we are gone? For most cats, there is no best answer. Each option has its own advantages and disadvantages based on your kitty's personality.

	Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<b>Take Kitty Along</b>	They get to be with you.	Could get lost, anxious in new environment.
<b>Boarding</b>	Able to get meds, safe environment, medical care if needed.	Are not at home in familiar surroundings.
<b>Kitty Sitter</b>	Can stay in own environment.	Sitter may not medicate appropriately; kitty may not eat well.

[If you choose to leave kitty with a sitter, find some useful information on our website.](#)

### A Cat's Not Just a Cat!

#### Breed Profile: Oriental Shorthair/Longhair



The Oriental Shorthair or Longhair is a breed that resembles the Siamese, but comes in more than 600 colors, fur patterns and coat length combinations.

This breed is intelligent, curious and social. They prefer to live in pairs or in groups and do not like being left alone for long periods of time. The Oriental loves to play, many even into adulthood, and some enjoy playing fetch. They can also be rather vocal.

While generally healthy, this breed can be prone to respiratory issues and heart disease.

[See our comprehensive list of cat breeds and related health conditions.](#)

### Cat Trivia

**True or false:** Orange cats are prone to developing heart disease, dental disease and allergies.

Be **FIRST** to email us with the **RIGHT** answer at [larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com](mailto:larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com) and win a free bag of organic catnip! See next month's issue for the answer!

#### Last month's trivia answer:

Answer: False. A group of cats is called a clowder, clutter or kindle.

Congrats to Kevin Larsen and Carrie Garcia who were first to reply with the correct answer and claim the free bag of catnip!

### Cat's Meow Tip: Have a Litter Kicker?

I have multiple cats so there is always at least one of them kicking litter out of the box. The only solution seems to be lots of sweeping and vacuuming. Now I place old beach towels and blankets around the litter boxes. They are much easier to fold up, shake out and just throw into the laundry! -- **Contributed by: Linda Wasche, Sylvan Lake**

**Do you have a cat care tip that is just the Cat's Meow? Email [larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com](mailto:larsen.christina.joy@gmail.com). If we run it, you get a FREE bag of organic catnip. Limit to 75 words. See past [Cat's Meow Tips](#).**



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Are You Getting  **The Scoop**

To sign up, send us an email at [meowmail@thecatpracticepc.com](mailto:meowmail@thecatpracticepc.com) or call 248.540.3390

### Follow Us in the News!

Check our website regularly for updates on our recent news coverage.

[thecatpracticepc.com/press.htm](http://thecatpracticepc.com/press.htm)

### Our Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 8 am – 9 pm  
Friday: 8 am – 8 pm  
Saturday & Sunday: 8 am – 6 pm

*I have studied many philosophers and many cats. The wisdom of cats is infinitely superior.*

- Hippolyte Taine

Follow us:   

Wellness/early detection

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Geriatrics/hospice

Kitty camp boarding

### The Cat Practice commitment to cats and their people:

- Spot health conditions early to avoid more costly care later.
- Treat the whole patient looking out for physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Respect each cat as an individual with his/her own distinct personality & heredity.
- Avoid surgery at all cost. (The exception: all cats should be spayed or neutered!)
- Provide alternatives for care whenever possible.
- Partner with cat families through knowledge sharing.
- Make oral hygiene and preventive dental care a priority.

The Scoop is published monthly by The Cat Practice.



875 South Worth  
Birmingham, MI 48009  
248-540-3390

[www.thecatpracticepc.com](http://www.thecatpracticepc.com)  
[meowmail@thecatpracticepc.com](mailto:meowmail@thecatpracticepc.com)

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