

Birmingham vet launches senior discount for cats

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Riley, who is 16 years old, is an AARC member and patient of The Cat Practice. He lives with his person, Sue Lang, in Birmingham.

A veterinary hospital in Birmingham is offering cats entering their senior years membership in a new group intended to make it easier for their families to care for them.

The Cat Practice's AARC (All About Retired Cats) offers discounts and perks to cats 15 years and older including 10 percent off wellness exams, and exams that include free blood pressure checks, free pain analysis, free nail trims and more. Cat owners simply register their cats as AARC members to receive the benefits.

"Today we tell pet owners that their cat may live 20 years and possibly more," said veterinarian Dr. Cindy Houlihan, owner of The Cat Practice. "Due to better care and food, pets are living longer. And just like humans, they are experiencing many of the same health issues as they get older."

Aging cats, dogs and many other pets are prone to kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism and gum disease. They also get arthritis, stiff joints and weak bones.

Houlihan says it is important to spot these health conditions early, before they become more serious or untreatable. To help senior pets get the most from their golden years, owners should:

- Have pets examined at least twice annually to help spot health changes early.
- Keep pets mentally and physically active with regular activities and play.
- Watch carefully for changes in behavior or habits.
- Keep weight appropriate for the pet's size and breed.
- Manage any physical discomfort with a pain management program.

"There are numerous options for keeping aging pets happy and comfortable," Dr. Houlihan says. "In the old days, veterinarians were much quicker to euthanize older pets. Today, there are many ways to provide a pet with a high quality of life well into their senior years."

To register your cat for The Cat Practice's AARC senior discount program, or for more information go to www.thecatpracticepc.com or call (248) 540-3390. The Cat Practice, located at 875 S. Worth, is Michigan's first cats-only veterinary hospital.