

## Heart Disease in Cats

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Heart disease - it's a silent threat. Symptoms don't show early on so it's hard to know there's a problem until it's advanced. This is especially the case with relatively sedentary indoors-only cats where there is rarely any significant acceleration of the pulse. While any cat can have it, heart disease has been linked to breeds like the Maine Coon, Bengal, Persian, and Ragdolls. Orange male cats are also prone to heart problems.

Heart disease is not limited to older cats. Forum member [Queenofcats81](#) says her cat Ollie was diagnosed with an enlarged heart when he was only four years old. In fact, heart disease can be congenital and present at the time of birth. According to [The Cornell Book of Cats](#), Siamese cats seem more prone to congenital heart defects.

### Symptoms to Watch For:

- Lack of appetite
- Weakness
- Labored breathing, more from the stomach than the chest area
- Coughing

[Kmd](#)'s nine year old tuxedo cat, Elmo, was diagnosed with a heart murmur. He was fine for a year but then showed a lack of interest in food and had trouble breathing. The veterinarian prescribed two kinds of medication (combined in capsule form and given with the help of a pill popper), which helped for almost eight months.

"Heart murmurs can come and go but you should keep checking and do an ultrasound," says Dr. Cindy Houlihan, owner of [The Cat Practice](#) in Birmingham, Michigan. "Also, larger male cats are more likely to have heart disease, especially purebreds."

[Threecatnight](#)'s cat was very young - only six months old - when his vet discovered a heart murmur and cardiomyopathy. A twice daily vitamin, Lasix and heart medications helped him live to the age of seven, at least four years longer than his original prognosis.

Jade, who lives with [cbuehner](#), was found to have a heart murmur at age three. She was treated and remained in good health until she had a heart attack at age fourteen. A prescription of Furosemide has kept Jade going to age sixteen, with no further problems.

Heart murmurs are not the only disease cats get. [DrBobCat](#)'s kitty suffered an aortic thromboembolism which is a blood clot in the aorta. "My cat suddenly started screaming and then dragging her rear legs. She had not been diagnosed with any heart problems." Even with morphine, the cat was still in pain and paralyzed. Since these clots tend to recur, a long term prognosis was poor. Due to the extreme pain, the cat was euthanized.

Irregular heartbeats are something that Flaco has lived with all his life. [SweetSally2](#) says her vet gives Flaco a clean bill of health each year and at age fourteen, he's doing fine.

"Prevention and early diagnosis are paramount," says Dr. Houlihan. "Regular veterinary visits, heart screening, and for breeders, genetic testing to see if the cat is a carrier for heart related problems, can help."

Medication can help reduce the workload on the heart by improving the oxygenation of the blood. Specific treatment protocols vary according to the severity and type of heart disease. If heart disease is caught early, medication can help cats live longer, more comfortably.

### Comments (1)



[Linda Rae](#) 3/27/13 at 8:53am

I hope every cat lover and owner reads this article and acts upon its information. Make sure you are doing everything for your kitty to help keep it's heart working even if it takes medication. Also be aware kitties are prone to kidney problems so it is essential kitties get their annual check ups to catch life altering diseases early and while treatable to ensure a longer and happier and healthier lifetime to share with you. I do not know if dogs can suffer from the same thromboembolisms, but can have heart problems. Get your dog to the vet for its annual checkups also.



Original link: <http://www.thecatsite.com/a/heart-disease-in-cats>