

What every Feline Family should know:

# Recognizing & treating pain in your cat



**Today there is no reason for any pet to be in pain.** Studies show that, in pets, even short-term pain, left untreated, leads to increased pain sensitivity, anxiety and fear. Chronic or persistent pain can delay healing, reduce appetite and activity level, compromise your pet's immune system and affect your cat's overall health and wellbeing.

NEVER try to treat your cat's pain with over-the-counter human pain medications (such as Tylenol), which can be fatal to cats.

## Cats often hide their pain

Tolerance for pain varies among cats. The best way to tell if your cat is in pain is to become familiar with what is "normal" behavior. Take note of eating habits, activity, sleep habits, litter box use and other behaviors. This will help you more easily spot changes. Like many animals, cat often hide their pain since it's a signal to other predators that they are weak and vulnerable. Get to know the warning signs that your pet may be in pain:

- |                                                                                                                                   |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|  Changes in eating habits or loss of appetite    | Change in patterns of movement                          |
|  Withdrawal or hiding from human contact         | Lack of activity or lethargy                            |
|  Sitting on top of paws                          | Sensitivity to touch                                    |
|  Spending more time in the litter box than usual | Licking and biting at a particular area of his/her body |
|  Crying out or whimpering                        |                                                         |

## Causes of pain in cats

Cats can be in pain following an injury or trauma. Illnesses and conditions such as bladder infections, joint problems, stomach problems, arthritis or tooth decay can all cause your cat significant pain. Serious illnesses like cancer can cause chronic or constant pain. Cats can also experience pain while recovering from surgery and other medical procedures.

## Treating feline pain

If your cat has a medical condition such as tooth decay or a urinary tract infection, **treating the underlying condition and cause of the pain should relieve your cat's discomfort.** Your veterinarian will prescribe feline pain medication along with medication to treat the underlying medical condition. If your cat is in chronic pain, as a result of an ongoing condition such as arthritis, your veterinarian will recommend a pain management program specific to your cat's needs.



**Often a multi-modal approach to pain management is recommended. This might include:**

- Pain medication specifically for your feline.
- Alternative therapies such as massage and acupuncture. (Ask your veterinarian if this might be beneficial to your cat.)
- Herbal remedies.
- Accommodating your cat by making litter boxes and food dishes easier to reach, putting things on one floor so your cat doesn't have to climb stairs, using ramps and steps to reduce jumping, and creating a quiet, stress free environment.

Copyright © The Cat Practice 2013



875 S. Worth, Birmingham, MI 48009 • 248-540-3390 • [thecatpracticepc.com](http://thecatpracticepc.com)

**NOTE:** Our "Feline Family" series covers many important topics to help your feline family members live longer, better and healthier lives. For other topics, or more information, go to [www.thecatpracticepc.com](http://www.thecatpracticepc.com) or call us at 248-540-3390.