



# Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

## Fat Cats Have Weighty Problems

Obesity is the most common dietary problem in cats in the United States. When an animal's weight is 10 to 15 percent above the optimum weight for its age and sex, it is considered obese. The normal weight for an adult cat is 8 to 12 pounds. Generally, older animals tend to be overweight because body fat increases with age.

Excessive fat negatively affects your cat's health, reducing its life-span. Respiratory and skin problems may occur secondarily to obesity.

When the caloric intake exceeds the energy expended to use the calories, weight gain occurs. Other factors such as metabolic disorders can cause a reduced metabolism rate, thus causing weight gain. However, it is thought that probably less than 5 percent of overweight problems in cats can be attributed to metabolic disorders.

The basic principles of weight control include increasing activity and decreasing caloric intake. Before initiating

a diet for an overweight cat consult with your veterinarian regarding the best approach to weight loss for your cat and to make sure no other medical problems exist.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 1991.



## Hyperthyroidism Afflicts Older Cats

Hyperthyroidism (overproduction of thyroid hormones) is a common endocrine disorder in middle-aged or older cats. It is not known if the overproduction is a result of a primary thyroid disorder or an external factor such as nutrition or environment that stimulates the gland.

Typical signs of hyperthyroidism include weight loss, increased appetite, hyperactivity, increased fluid intake and urination, vomiting, diarrhea, and muscle weakness. A middle-aged or older cat with these signs should be examined by a veterinarian. Because the signs can be suggestive of other diseases, your veterinarian will probably perform a complete blood count, routine serum biochemical tests, and serum thyroid hormone concentrations to aid in a definitive diagnosis.

Treatment is available in the form of surgery, antithyroid drugs, or radioactive iodine therapy. Each form of treatment has its advantages and disadvantages. Your veterinarian's choice of treatment will be based on several factors, including age, the presence of associated heart disease or other medical problems.

### Clip and Save — Vaccination Schedule

An appropriate vaccination program is important to protect your cat's health. All cats should be vaccinated against panleukopenia, herpesvirus, calicivirus, and rabies. Additionally, cats can be vaccinated for chlamydia, leukemia, and feline infectious peritonitis.

Disease	Age at First Vaccination (weeks)	Age at Second Vaccination (weeks)	Revaccination intervals (months)
Panleukopenia	8-10	12-16	12
Rhinotracheitis	8-10*	12-16	12
Caliciviral Disease	8-10*	12-16	12
Pneumonitis	8-10	12-16	12
Rabies	12	64	12 or 36
Feline Leukemia	9-10	12-13	12
Feline Infectious Peritonitis	16	20	12

\* May be performed earlier but at the risk of increased maternal antibody interference.

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