



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

What's that glow in the dark?

If you've ever seen the green glow of your cat's eyes in a dark room and wondered why that happens, the answer is fairly simple. The corneas and pupils of your cat's eyes are oversized to gather more light. A reflective layer called the tapetum lucidum, located deep to the light sensing layers of the retina, creates the green glow we see when light reflects from a cat's eye.

Light passing through the eye stimulates the light-sensitive cells in the retina, and the reflective layer sends the light back through, giving the cat the ability to see very well in low light. Their eyes also have a high number of rod photoreceptors that sense motion and work best in low light levels.

But, these special features don't

help the cat distinguish colors any better. In fact, the cones of the cat's eyes (they have three types of cones) do not allow them to see colors as humans do. Instead of seeing bright crisp colors, scientists believe the same colors look pastel-like to cats. As a result, cats generally respond better to pastels like blue and yellow. Greens and reds are hard for cats to see; a green lawn is whitish and a red flower is simply dark.

Keeping your kitty's eyes in good shape is essential. As part of your regular routine, examine her eyes. They should be bright and the pupils should be of equal size. There should be little if any tearing at the corners of the eyes. And, be sure your cat is not squinting with either eye.

Diabetes warning signs

Diabetes mellitus ("sugar diabetes") is a fairly common disease seen in the cat. The signs of diabetes include:

- Excessive thirst
- Excessive urination
- A ravenous appetite combined with weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness
- Vomiting
- Dehydration
- A strong odor of acetone on the breath

If your cat shows any of the above signs, take her to your veterinarian for a complete checkup. Diabetes is usually fairly easy to diagnose.

Deadly lilies

With spring here, many of us will be planting lilies in our garden and buying them potted for our homes. While they look beautiful, several types can be deadly to cats. The Asparagus Fern, Lily-of-the-Valley, Tiger Lily, and Easter Lily are among the most deadly of the Liliaceae family, causing kidney failure in cats.



All parts of the lily plant are toxic, and consuming even small amounts can cause severe poisoning. It only takes a few hours after ingestion of the plant for the cat to begin to show signs of kidney failure, including vomiting, lethargy, and lack of appetite. As the kidney damage progresses, the signs worsen. Without prompt treatment by your veterinarian, your cat will develop kidney failure within 72 hours.

Lilies are not the only plants that are potentially poisonous to cats. There are hundreds of different species that could cause a mild or serious problem. If you suspect your cat has eaten a poisonous plant, contact your veterinarian or poison control center immediately. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' National Animal Poison Control Center (ASPCA/NAPCC) 24-hour poison control hotline for animals telephone number is 888-526-4435 or 800-548-2423. For online information, visit the web site at <http://www.napcc.aspcpa.org>.

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