

Geriatrics

Older cats have special needs, like people. Most need a special diet to compensate for a slower metabolism. Sensitive to temperature, they often seek warm spots around the house. Arthritis is a tendency, so jumping high is not as easy as it used to be. Make sure they have easy access to plenty of water: dehydration is common in older cats and is often associated with kidney disease or diabetes. Common signs of problems are drinking and urinating significantly more than usual. Also, watch for anorexia, vomiting, or diarrhea.

To help diagnose subclinical diseases (where symptoms haven't appeared) our doctors recommend exams every 6 months and test for specific problems. Diagnosed early, most illnesses are usually easier and less expensive to treat – and the prognosis is better, too!

Here are the lab tests commonly performed in our Geriatric Program, and some of the information they will reveal:

- CBC (Complete Blood Count) – Helps detect signs of infection or anemia.
- Chemistry Profile – Uncovers organ system disease (in the liver and kidneys: can indicate diabetes and checks electrolyte levels).
- Urinalysis – Tells us about the kidneys, detects diabetes and cystitis
- Thyroid Screen – Detects hyperthyroidism, and excessive level of thyroid hormone
- FeLV Test – Checks for the presence of the Feline Leukemia Virus
- FIV Test – Checks for the presence of Feline Immunodeficiency Virus
- Feline Heartworm Test – Checks for the presence of heartworms.
- Blood Pressure – Detects hypertension often associated with kidney or thyroid disease

If your cat is 9 or older, he should have a Geriatric workup. Ideally, these tests should be done on a healthy cat, but are also performed on sick patients to evaluate or diagnose illness. These tests are also used as a pre-anesthetic workup in geriatric cats (before surgery or dental treatments) and as a guide to nutritional counseling for the older cat.

Your cat is there through thick and thin, offering love and affection every time you walk in the door. Make sure your feline friend has a long, healthy life. Ask our doctors for more information about our Geriatric Program.