

# Items to Focus on During Each Life Stage

Observe at home and discuss with your veterinarian

	KITTEN	YOUNG ADULT	MATURE ADULT	SENIOR
<b>Veterinary Checkups</b>	At least once per year (more frequent for cat's with health conditions)			At least every 6 months
<b>At All Ages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for subtle signs of behavior, illness, pain, and stress</li> <li>• Understand normal feline behaviors and that changes in cat's behavior can be significant</li> <li>• Get your cat comfortable with the carrier</li> <li>• Schedule routine checkups for your cat which can help them long-term</li> <li>• Discuss identification for your cat (microchipping)</li> <li>• Understand scratching is a natural, normal feline behavior; learn about caring for claws</li> <li>• Discuss pet insurance and financial planning options</li> </ul>			
<b>Medical History</b>	Common conditions for specific breeds and genetic concerns (if applicable)	Vomiting, hairballs, diarrhea, changes in behavior, and grooming habits	Changes in appetite, hydration, vomiting, diarrhea, vocalization, nighttime activity, mobility, vision, litter box habits, and grooming habits	
<b>Extra Focus During the Checkup</b>	Infectious diseases, genetic findings, and discuss sterilization (spay/neuter)	Heart, lungs, skin, and teeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased focus on the abdomen, heart, lungs, thyroid, kidneys, eyes, and teeth</li> <li>• Muscle and bone assessment, and thorough pain and arthritis assessment</li> </ul>	
<b>Nutrition and Weight Management</b>	Food being fed, amount being fed, frequency of feeding, and food toy/puzzles	Weight gain, obesity risks, play, and exercise	Weight loss and weight gain, type of food being fed to ensure it provides what your senior cat needs, and prescription diets (if needed)	
<b>Behavior and Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing kittens to people and other pets</li> <li>• Petting, brushing, nail trimming, and grooming</li> <li>• Proper play (not using hands or feet as toys to avoid risk of future aggressive behavior)</li> <li>• Becoming comfortable with the carrier, travel, and veterinary visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes between cats and human-cat interactions</li> <li>• Gentle handling techniques for acceptance of checkups for mouth, ears, and feet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjusting environmental needs as your cat ages</li> <li>• Easy accessibility to the litter box, warm soft bed, and food/water</li> <li>• Watching closely for subtle behavior changes</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and location of resources (litter box, food, water, sleeping areas)</li> <li>• Housing (indoor/outdoor/partial outdoor access), hunting activity, and others in the home</li> <li>• Housemate cats and their usual interactions</li> <li>• Changes in behavior, problematic or unwanted behaviors, and use of positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Environmental needs (toys, scratching posts, resting places, play)</li> </ul>			
<b>Litter Box</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter box setup, location, litter type, cleaning, and litter preference</li> <li>• Normal toileting behavior</li> </ul>	Review and adjust litter box size and location to accommodate growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter box location to avoid stairs</li> <li>• Review and adjust litter box size, location, and cleaning regimens as necessary</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toileting habits, stool appearance, and litter ball size</li> <li>• Urination or defecation outside the litter box</li> <li>• Differences between toileting and marking (territory) behaviors</li> <li>• Litter box management (number of boxes, size, location, litter type, cleaning)</li> </ul>			
<b>Oral Health</b>	Getting used to mouth handling and brushing/wiping of teeth	Specific dental food type (if needed)	Changes in appearance to your cat's mouth, if your cat appears to be in pain when eating, or if your cat is not eating or chewing	
	Dental examination, dental disease, preventive care, and home care with brushing/wiping of teeth			
<b>Parasite Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks of parasites for cats regardless of indoor/outdoor status</li> <li>• Risks of exposure based on lifestyle, geographic location, and travel</li> <li>• Year round treatment for the prevention of heartworms, fleas, ticks, and intestinal parasites (regardless of indoor/outdoor status)</li> <li>• Zoonotic risks (diseases passed between animals and people)</li> </ul>			