

Cat Eye Care - Diagnosing Cataracts As Part Of Your Cat Eye Care Program

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More info...
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A solid cat eye care program includes understanding the impact of some cat eye disorders on your cat's eyesight. Cataract problems are relatively rare in cats and are usually related to complications from diabetes. Some breeds inherit a tendency for developing cataracts: Birmans, Himalayans, Persians and British Shorthairs. The incidence is low and the cataract tends to remain small, often small enough to be ignored.

Of those cataracts that do cause or threaten blindness, many are treated with surgery. If blindness does result from an inoperable cataract, your feline should live a safe life if she is kept indoors. The cataract itself is not painful.

Recognizing Problems

It pays to catch the problem early. A long-term cataract is denser and harder to remove with longer surgeries tending to involve more complications. A cat owner should suspect a problem and seek veterinary attention whenever the eye appears different than it usually does.

Don't just think your cat's eyes are getting older when you notice a distinct disparity in eye clarity, increased opacity, cloudiness or a change in pupil size. These changes indicate a real problem.

Causes

Diabetes is the most common cause of cataracts in cats. The second most common cause is an inflammatory disease, like uveitis. You can readily recognize the signs of uveitis: the eye color changes, the surface of the eye is roughened and the pupil becomes smaller. This condition is painful to your cat. He may squint, have watery eyes, and eyelid spasms.

The most common causes of uveitis are the feline leukemia virus, feline infectious peritonitis, toxoplasmosis, or feline immunodeficiency virus. Early treatment of the cause can prevent a cataract or minimize the effect of one that has already formed.

Another cause of cataracts is an eye trauma. If your cat's eye is punctured in a cat fight or other incident and the outer layer of the lens is damaged, your veterinarian may talk with you about removing the lens. This is because damaged lenses tend to develop cancer in cats. Removing the lens negates the chance of cancer.

Treatment

Cataracts that go untreated can lead to glaucoma, which is a painful disease. If your cat's eyes look cloudy, watery, squinty or just don't look normal, it's time for a visit to your veterinarian. If uveitis is suspected, your veterinarian might run tests for the underlying causes and prescribe a medicated eye drop to bring the inflammation under control. If a

cataract is formed or there has been eye trauma, you will probably be referred to an eye specialist, a veterinary ophthalmologist.

Surgery

Just because a cataract is present, it does not necessarily mean surgery. The size and location of the cataract are factors in treatment. If the cataract is large or very dense, then complications can be controlled with medications.

It is completely reasonable to expect your cat to have a good life even if he becomes blind. Keeping him indoors helps protect him as well as keeping things in the same place so he can learn the paths to his toys, litter box, food and favorite areas. Keep the lights dim helps him see better with what eyesight he has left.

A puncture to the eye lens or larger congenital cataracts are more likely candidates for surgery. Some cat owners forgo cataract surgery that is caused by uveitis. Uveitis already causes inflammation to the eye, so surgery can just lead to more inflammation, complications and pain.

Other Considerations

The pre-op analysis, surgery and post-surgery checkups run from \$1,500 to \$3,000. Then there is the post-op medication. Opting for a small monthly cat health care insurance program helps with the financial burden. It certainly reduces the necessity of a cat eye care decision based upon limited financial resources.

Cataracts in cats are rare. As part of your cat eye care program, take a few minutes to check out your felines eyes. If you notice cloudiness, watery eyes, squinting or a significant change in your cat's eyes or navigation, look to your veterinarian for cat eye care guidance. Not all cataracts warrant surgery. A blind cat can lead a normal, happy life indoors and with proper eye medications.

Kate Rieger has been owned by 15+ cats and is a champion of spaying all her cat neighbors. While she would like to extend this same concept to some of the human population, she swears she's only into altering cats. She is on good behavior during her speaking engagements at various organizations. Drop by for a free copy of her eBook '111

Things You Don't Know That Could Harm Your Cat.'

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