



Problems That Aging Cats Are Susceptible To

By [Michael D. Rosenthal](#)

It's a given that a cat ages more rapidly than what humans do. Some veterinarians will tell you that a one-year old cat is equivalent to a 16-year old child, although I think this is extreme. The different schools of thoughts propounded by vets and feline experts will tell you that the ratio is anywhere from 4 to 7:1 when it comes to comparing the aging process of a feline to that of a human. Despite the difficulty in predicting an exact age, most vets and experts consider a feline to be "geriatric" once it is 10 years old.

Cats are now living longer than ever before with the average age of a house cat that has been well cared for being around 15 years of age. Additionally, cats that have been neutered or spayed tend to live longer than those that have not been. The speculation here is that cats that have not been "fixed" tend to roam around a lot more and are therefore prone to even fatal injuries. It also holds true that they succumb to diseases and health maladies because of exposure to the outside environment.

Felines are amazing pieces of machinery, so to speak, in that they have the capability of repairing themselves. For instance, despite the fact that they have two kidneys, they only need a part of one of them in order to stay healthy. Eventually, the aging process in cats takes its toll on them, just like it does with us, and therefore they experience those bodily changes that are characteristically associated with getting older.

The bottom line here is that the key elements of exercise, health care, and proper nutrition, combined with the special care they need once they have entered their "golden years," will affect your cat's life expectancy positively. The following list, though quite lengthy, are the more common conditions and problems that older cats may eventually face and that you as an owner will have to deal with when they arise:

- Anemia
- Arthritis and stiff joints
- Blood pressure problems
- Bone brittleness and weakness
- Breathing issues resulting from less flexibility of the lung muscles
- Cancer
- Decreased brain cell count
- Decreased control of body temperature
- Decreased functions of the kidneys and liver
- Decreased intestinal and stomach functions which oftentimes lead to impaired digestive processes
- Decreased production of saliva and difficulties in swallowing
- Decreased sensitivity to all the senses excluding touch
- Dehydration resulting from a decreased sensitivity to thirst
- Greater occurrence of infection due to increased susceptibility
- Increased bone brittleness
- Mouth ulcers
- Muscle dysfunction and weakness



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- Periodontal conditions and tooth loss
- Shallower sleeping patterns which leads to irritability and temperament issues
- Skin abnormalities such as abnormally brittle or misshaped claws, alopecia, and dullness of the coat

From the time they are kittens, cats need to be provided with four critical elements in order to enter their golden years in the best possible shape - an appropriate amount of regular exercise, good health care, proper nutrition, and a stimulating lifestyle.

For more easy, practical tips on [taking great care of your cat](#) be sure to visit the author's [feline health](#) site now.

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