

February 18, 2010



Pearls for the Practitioner

Topic: Feline Healthcare Guidelines

The Animal Medical Center has created this e-mail publication to keep you informed about the latest practices in veterinary medicine and how these practices are being applied at The AMC. If you are interested in obtaining past issues of "Pearls for the Practitioner" or if you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please e-mail allison.younger@amcny.org.

The Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery has recently published the AAFP-AAHA Feline Life Stage Guidelines (J Fel Med Surg 2010;12:43-54 and J Am Anim Hosp Assoc 2010;46:70-65). Using evidence-based healthcare where possible, a consensus panel of feline experts developed these guidelines.

The guidelines recommend annual physical examinations for cats < 7 years of age. Veterinarians caring for cats >7 years of age may recommend semi-annual exams for these cats since health changes can occur rapidly in cats who are masters at disguising signs of illness. For semi-annual exams to be successful, the panel recommends veterinarians thoroughly explain the purpose of the exams and have a plan regarding what information should be covered at each visit. Information relating to topics for discussing with cat owners is included in the guidelines.

The expert panel defined the minimum database for cats at various life stages. Retroviral testing and fecal analysis are important in all life stages. Blood counts, biochemical profiling, urinalysis and thyroid hormone levels become more important in the mature cat and blood pressure in the geriatric cat. When clinical signs develop, the minimum database is a critical part of the evaluation for any cat.

The expert panel felt environmental enrichment was critical to maintaining a healthy pet cat. Suggestions included: three 15-minute per day exercise sessions to help maintain weight, foraging devices to help provide entertainment and portion control, and adequate litter boxes and climbing trees for the number of cats in the household.

The guidelines also contain an extensive list of feline websites as a reference for veterinarians.

To view these guidelines or for more information, visit the [AAHA](#) or [AAFP](#) website.

For those interested in gaining more insight into feline internal medicine, The AMC is sponsoring two upcoming lectures on this topic. On Friday, February 26 from 8-9:00am, Jörg M. Steiner, Dr.Med.Vet., Ph.D., DACVIM., Dipl. ECVIM-CA, Director, GI Laboratory, Texas A&M University, will discuss **Feline Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency** and on Monday, March 1 from 8-9:00am, S. Dru Forrester, DVM, MS, DACVIM, Assoc Director Scientific Affairs, Hills Pet Nutrition, will speak about **Cats and Carbohydrates**. Both lectures will take place in the 6th floor conference room at The AMC.

For more information, please contact Dr. Ann Hohenhaus at 212.329.8612 or email ann.hohenhaus@amcny.org.