



OPTIMUM CHOICES, LLC
Healthy choices for people and pets

HealthyLife.Net Radio Show
Wendy's Animal Talk, Host Wendy Nan Rees
Guest Russell Louie

How to Avoid Common Health Problems in Senior Cats
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Russell, has studied holistic health for over 30 years and lived a holistic lifestyle for over 57 years. He specializes in integrating his scientific background with his knowledge of health, to holistically help both people and pets. His greatest talent is being able to cut through all the marketing hype, using his scientific background, to tell people what is truly holistic. Today, our topic is "*How to avoid common health problems in senior cats.*"

Russell, so many senior cats seem to have health problems today. Why is that?

I feel there are three main reasons. Keep in mind I am not a vet, so this is just my holistic perspective.

1. Poor nutritional diet.
2. Over vaccinations.
3. Over breeding and poor breeding practices.

OK, how did you come to pick poor nutrition as your first reason?

Fifty years ago, when I was growing up, cats easily lived to be 15-20 years old and still be relatively healthy. It was not uncommon to have a senior cat 20+ years old. Since the 1950's, after processed food was introduced to society, the average life expectancy of our cats has steadily decreased to half that today. Nowadays, people think a 10-12 year old cat is old and senior.

So, why do you attribute that to processed foods?

Our feline companions were domesticated by the Egyptians. The Egyptians needed a predator to keep out the mice, rats and other vermin from their granaries. So, they domesticated the African wild cat to do just that.

What are the characteristics of this wild cat?

For one, it lives in the desert. There is very little water supply in the desert, so Nature meant this African wild cat to get its moisture from killing its prey, not by drinking. Another characteristic

is that this African wild cat did not eat grains. Remember, the Egyptians wanted this domesticated cat to protect their granaries, not eat the grains.

That is very interesting history. So, how does that relate to our cats today?

About 80% of cat guardians today, feed a diet of dry kibble because it is cheap and convenient in our fast-paced society. Dry kibble is the exact opposite type of diet the African wild cat needs to be healthy. The name “DRY” kibble tells you there is very little moisture in it. Dry kibble contains anywhere between 20-80% grains or carbohydrates with the remaining being meat. Remember the Egyptians chose the African wild cat to guard their granaries because it did not eat grains. And now, we feed them dry food that is mostly grains or carbohydrates with added preservatives, sugars (such as corn and beet pulp) and fillers (such as peanut hulls and soy) in our cat’s processed food. Nature never designed these carnivores to eat this type of convenient modern-day diet.

So, by feeding an inappropriate diet that Nature did not design the domesticated cat to eat, we have actually shortened their lifespan?

That is exactly right. It is like capturing a lion or tiger in the wild, taking it to a zoo and feeding it pop corn, hay and rabbit pellets for food. How healthy will that lion or tiger be in a few years?

Not very healthy. So, how does the lack of moisture, lack of meat and too much grain and sugars effect our senior cats?

When we feed our domesticated cat DRY kibble, our cats must now make up for that lack of moisture in their food by drinking more water. But Nature meant the wild cat to get all its moisture from the prey it killed, so a wild cat does not have a strong thirst instinct. Because of this lack of thirst instinct, our domesticated cat will never drink enough on its own to make up for lack of moisture in its natural diet. The kidneys, therefore, will always be working overtime and with less fluid in the body to filter out toxins and wastes.

Is this the reason so many senior cats get chronic kidney disease?

It certainly is. The number one cat disease that people contact us about in our holistic practice is Chronic Renal Failure or CRF. Do a search on the Internet for Chronic Renal Failure or CRF. You will see a multitude of websites, diets, supplements, treatments and support groups for feline guardians of CRF cats. 50 years ago, before the advent of dry kibble, this was not necessary.

Well then, how does one prevent CRF if I have a younger cat?

That is real easy. DO NOT feed dry kibble to a kitten or any cat for that matter. Feed a premium canned food diet, raw food diet and even a homemade diet with the proper ratio of meats, a little

vegetables and enough moisture to approximate what Nature meant the African cat to eat in the wild.

Is that not more expensive?

Not when one compares that to about \$2,000 for the first vet visit and hospital stay to diagnose CRF and then the \$500-2,000 per year expense for special food, kidney supplements and subcutaneous fluids administered for the rest of the cat's life.

You are right. That is short-sighted thinking.

One could spend an extra \$50/month on better food (not dry kibble) for the first ten years of a cat's life and still come out ahead if their cat did not get CRF.

Those are wise words from my holistic mentor. Now, you mentioned other unnatural ingredients they put in dry kibble. How do they affect cats?

The corn and beet pulp pet food manufacturers put in dry kibble are just fillers. These ingredients are converted to sugar in the body that must be processed by the pancreas. Because wild cats do not normally get these ingredients in their diet, our domesticated cats will have an over-worked and stressed-out pancreas after getting any form of corn or beet pulp in their pet food. As you know, the pancreas helps the body regulate blood sugar levels.

Is that why so many of our pets are getting diabetes?

I cannot say that is the only reason but when I was growing up 50 years ago, diabetes was a human degenerative disease that rarely affected cats. One of our feline consultants and good personal friend is a retired feline vet. Her name is Dr Jean Hofve and she is adamantly against feeding any dry kibble to cats. She told his if she could wave a magic wand, she would ban all dry kibble for cats. She literally calls dry kibble, "diabetes in a bag for cats."

Well, that is pretty clear. She seems like a good feline resource.

Yes, let me give your listeners her website: www.LittleBigCat.com. Again, her name is Dr Jean H-o-f-v-e. She downloaded her knowledge from her feline practice into an extensive article library for cat guardians. Three articles that are a MUST read for all cats guardians are [Kidney Disease in Older Cats](#), [What Cats Should Eat](#) and [Why Cats Need Canned Food](#).

Thank you for that great Internet cat resource. You mention another ingredient in dry kibble used as filler, soy.

Let me go over this one in particular because it illustrates a very common health food misconception. Soy is often used in pet food, as well as people food, as a healthy addition. Yes, there are health benefits if soy is fermented in the traditional Oriental way. But if soy is not soaked or fermented, then it contains many toxins and could cause unintended harm to both ours and our pet's bodies.

Can you give my listeners some of the details on this unintended harm?

I will discuss some of them now but there are far too many to go into details.

1. There are phytoestrogens in soy which can lower testosterone levels. Soy phytoestrogens have also been shown in research to disrupt endocrine function and have the potential to cause infertility.
2. Soy phytoestrogens are potent anti-thyroid agents that cause hypothyroidism and may even cause thyroid cancer. In human infants, consumption of soy formula has been linked to autoimmune thyroid disease.
3. Japanese typically combine their tempeh with fish broth and seaweed that naturally contains iodine, helping offset the thyroid-suppressing effects of soy. But this is not done in pet food.
4. There are high levels of phytic acid in soy which reduce assimilation of calcium, magnesium, copper, iron and zinc. High phytate diets have been shown to cause growth problems in children.
5. Trypsin inhibitors in soy interfere with protein digestion and may cause pancreatic disorders. In test animals soy containing trypsin inhibitors caused stunted growth.
6. Soy foods contain high levels of aluminum which is toxic to the nervous system and the kidneys.
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7. Vitamin B12 analogs in soy are not absorbed and actually increase the body's requirement for B12.
8. Soy foods increase the body's requirement for vitamin D.
9. Fragile proteins are denatured during high temperature processing to make soy protein isolate and textured vegetable protein.
10. Processing of soy protein results in the formation of toxic lysinoalanine and highly carcinogenic nitrosamines.
11. Free glutamic acid or MSG, a potent neurotoxin, is formed during soy food processing and additional amounts are added to many soy foods.

Source: www.OptimumChoices.com/Soy.htm

Wow, I can see now how soy could be contributing to thyroid imbalances, kidney and pancreas malfunctions and a host of other health problems. Can you post the whole list on my blog?

Sure.

Let us move on to your #2 reason why senior cats have so many health problems. You mentioned over vaccinations as your #2 reason.

Research from most veterinary schools and holistic veterinary associations have concluded that annual boosters are unnecessary for most pets, and potentially harmful to some. These sources now recommend waiting three years between boosters for the most common cat vaccines. Unfortunately, many old school veterinarians still advocate annual vaccinations, thereby over vaccinating cats.

Can you give my listeners any specific data on this?

Dr. Ronald Schultz, at the University of Wisconsin, is the premier vaccine researcher in the country. He says that the feline distemper (panleukopenia) vaccine provides lifelong immunity and therefore, need not be given annually. He believes that a single dose of modified live vaccine given at 10-14 weeks of age is protective for life. The feline distemper vaccines have actually been shown to induce immunity for 3 years or more.

So, these annual boosters are totally unnecessary for the vast majority of animals?

That is right. Now the rabies vaccine is required by law for most animals in most jurisdictions. Therefore, it is important from a legal standpoint to follow your jurisdiction's regulations concerning rabies vaccines for your pets. But the way the immune system works, a vaccine does not suddenly lose its effectiveness a year and a day after the last shot. Additional vaccines in an immunized animal do not increase or improve the immunity, but they do increase the risks.

Can you tell my listeners about those risks?

If your pet has a chronic disease or is for any reason not completely healthy, it should NOT be vaccinated until its immune system is well. All vaccines carry a label that states "for use in healthy animals only." Many jurisdictions will accept an exemption letter from your veterinarian attesting to the fact that your pet is at high risk if it is sick or being treated for a disease and cannot be vaccinated.

Are there any other risks?

Here is a quote from Dr. Jean Hofve's article on [vaccinations](#). "The common feline distemper (panleukopenia) virus is grown in a culture of feline kidney cells. Recent work at Colorado State University showed that most kittens developed autoantibodies to their own kidney tissues after being vaccinated for distemper. When autoantibodies react with body tissue, the result is inflammation. Each booster vaccine creates even more antibodies—and more inflammation. Chronic low-grade inflammation is the primary cause of CRF, which is almost guaranteed to develop in older cats. In other words, annual re-vaccination for feline distemper may be the major cause of CRF in older cats."

So, what is a cat guardian to do if they only want the minimal vaccinations?

Holistic experts agree that only “core” vaccines — feline distemper and rabies — are necessary for cats. Dr. Jean Hofve says all other vaccines are optional, and should only be given if the animal’s lifestyle or health considerations make them necessary. I suggest people talk to their veterinarian and ask the need of each recommended vaccine and what the potential adverse effects are. Make sure that every vaccine is well justified. Another good rule to follow is do not give multiple vaccines at the same time; space them out at least 3 weeks apart and certainly only vaccinate a healthy cat, so that the immune system is not compromised further.

How can one find out if their location accepts the 3 year rabies protocol?

Check with their state and local jurisdiction to see what the regulations are. Also, one can go to www.RabiesChallengeFund.org to see what the latest jurisdictions have changed to the 3-year protocol.

Can we go over your third reason for common health problems in senior cats—over breeding and poor breeding practices?

Many breeders breed for looks and perfect structure without regard to any long-term health consequences. We all know the problems with “kitten and puppy mill” pets. Some breeders know nothing about nutrition and feed the cheapest dry kibble food that they can get away with. All this can have future consequences.

Can you give us an example of how this can affect the future health in our cats?

If you remember in our December show on IBD, I mentioned that biologists tell us cats are obligate carnivores needing 70-90% meat protein in their diet to thrive in the wild. So, if one raises their kittens on cheap dry kibble, containing only 20-40% meat protein at best and too much carbohydrates and sugar, then they are supplying a nutrient deficient diet while these young bodies are developing. One should expect health issues (such as IBD, allergies, obesity and diabetes) as they grow older. It is like feeding our human babies nothing but fruit and vegetable-flavored cookies and wondering why they are obese, diabetic, and allergic and have all sorts of health problems as adults.

I agree with that logic.

That is why education on the proper diet for a carnivore and healthy options, such as your *Natural Pet Food Cookbook* are so important for new pet owners.

What other breeding practices can mean health problems in older cats?

[Dr. Alfred Plechner](#), found a lot of pets, especially pure bred ones, had a malfunctioning thyroid and adrenal glands. This lead to an imbalanced endocrine and deficient immune system. If this endocrine-immune imbalance is present, then the IgA's (immunoglobulin antibodies regulated by the endocrine system) that normally coat the mucus membranes of the gut for protection, go out of control and sometimes even attack the body itself. The walls of the gut then become inflamed and thicken for protection. With the gut's defense system compromised, harmful bacteria and other bad microorganisms can attack.

That sounds like irritable bowel disease to me?

Not only irritable bowel disease but leaky gut syndrome, allergies and a host of other digestive disorders.

So, how can one avoid this?

One way is to avoid buying those perfect looking cats in pet stores. They are only breed for looks and may not have the best immune system. Unfortunately, this latter fact does not show up until the cat gets older. Buy from a responsible breeder that test the parents for any genetic defects and will not perpetuate this endocrine-immune system imbalance.

You seem to have wealth of pet knowledge. How can we access more of your 57 years of holistic wisdom?

One way is to go to our website, www.OptimumChoices.com and sign up for our free monthly [e-newsletters](#). We have written articles on such topics as, Is glucosamine the answer for arthritis? Healthy water for you and your pets and Whole Food Products vs. Supplements. All past articles are archived online and one can search for a specific topic. If your listeners will check the box at the bottom of the subscription form, we'll send subscribers a free report entitled **What Pet Food Companies Don't Want You to Know**. This report contains 11-points some of which we covered today.

What other holistic resources do you have that would be of interest my listeners?

We have written a series of Holistic Choices [e-Books](#). Readers can take advantage of the latest holistic research we find and absorb the information in a small chunk rather than a 100+ page book. The first three titles that have been published are:

- *Save Your Dog or Cat*
- *Secrets of Longevity (for people)*
- *How to become a canine massage provider*

How can me and my listeners get a copy?

Go to our website www.OptimumChoices.com and click on the [e-Books] button in the left column on our home page. As a special offer, I will give your listeners a free e-Book with any

purchase of BioPreparation for pets or BioSuperfood for people. Just have them enter in the Special Instructions box of our shopping cart, “**Wendy sent me**” and ask for their **free *Save Your Dog or Cat*** e-Book or mention it in their telephone order.

Thank you for sharing your holistic wisdom with my listeners today.

For more information on Optimum Choices and holistic options for your pet, go to Russell’s website at <http://www.OptimumChoices.com>. You can call toll-free 866-305-2306 or e-mail them at info@OptimumChoices.com.