

It is also important to assess what complications of high blood pressure may already have taken place, such as ocular disease, so that it can be appropriately monitored following treatment.



It can take a little time to stabilise a cat's blood pressure so initially, regular monitoring and perhaps small changes to medication dose, and/or frequency might be required.

If your cat has also been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease it's also important to monitor their kidney function on a regular basis whilst using the anti-hypertensive drug treatment.

What is the prognosis of cat's with high blood pressure?

In cat's where high blood pressure is the only condition, it's possible to manage the problem with medication to prevent complications such as damage to the eyes.

Where there is an underlying cause, such as chronic kidney disease, the long-term prognosis depends on the nature and severity of the disease that has caused the high blood pressure. In all cases, it is very important to monitor as accurately as possible, the pressure on a regular basis so steps can be taken to avoid further problems.

If you'd like to see a cat have their blood pressure taken, visit our YouTube channel using the following link: <https://youtu.be/nWNBr9K1I3Y>

Complimentary health monitoring of senior cats is a service provided by us, so get in contact for further details.

Consulting Times

Hillock Lane Surgery

Monday to Friday
8.30am to 7pm

Saturday
8.30am to 1pm



Blackpool Surgery

Monday to Friday
8.30am to 6pm

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High Blood Pressure in Cats

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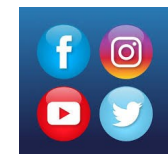
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What is hypertension?

Hypertension is the medical term for high blood pressure. This is a common problem for humans but is also now a recognised common issue for older cats.

The most common reason a cat might have high blood pressure is as a result of another, underlying medical condition (secondary hypertension). However high blood pressure in cats that don't have any underlying medical condition is also seen in cats.

The most common cause of high blood pressure as a result of having an underlying medical condition is chronic kidney disease but there are also other diseases where it can predispose a cat to develop high blood pressure. There is a relationship between hypertension and hyperthyroidism (an overactive thyroid gland) in cats too.

Should I be concerned if my cat has high blood pressure?



In short, yes. High blood pressure is damaging to the body and can have the following serious effects:

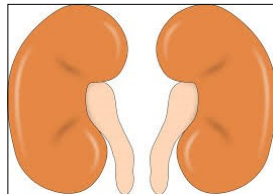
- **Eyes**—bleeding into the eyes and retinal changes, such as swelling and detachment can occur. This may result in damage to your cat's vision and may even lead to blindness. Which is often permanent. In some cases, bleeding can be seen in the front chamber of the eye even without the use of any special

veterinary equipment.

- **Brain & nervous system**—bleeding into the brain can cause neurological signs such as odd behaviour, a wobbly or drunken gait, seizures, dementia and coma.
- **Heart**—this organ has to work harder because of the high blood pressure. As a consequence, the muscle of one of the major heart chambers, the

left ventricle, becomes thickened. In very severe cases, this can lead to the development of congestive heart failure. Symptoms of this are breathlessness and lethargy.

- **Kidneys**—There is an increased risk of kidney failure developing as a result of high blood pressure and for those cats who already have an existing kidney disease, hypertension is likely to make the disease significantly worse over time.



How will I know if my cat has high blood pressure?

In many patients, clinical signs of high blood pressure in itself won't be seen until the condition advances. In fact, it might only be when your cat develops sudden blindness as a result of bleeding into the eye or retinal detachment that an owner might realise there is an issue.

Any symptoms your cat may present with will commonly be associated with another, underlying disease. For example, an owner may bring their cat to see a vet because they are losing weight in spite of having a voracious appetite. After a full clinical examination, including measuring their blood pressure, hypertension may be detected.

What can I do to monitor my cat's blood pressure?

Because high blood pressure is common in older cats, it's really important to have their blood pressure checked on a regular basis, even in cats that appear healthy and are showing no obvious signs of disease. ISFM guidelines recommend once a year from age 7-11 and then twice a year thereafter. This helps with the early detection of the condition allowing for treatment to be given to avoid the damaging effects on the other organs of the body.



If your cat has already been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, heart disease or has sudden onset blindness or other neurological signs, owners should ensure they have their cat's blood pressure checked as part of their routine health checks.

How do you measure a cat's blood pressure?

The equipment we use to measure a cat's blood pressure is very similar to the equipment used to measure the blood pressure of humans. An inflatable cuff is placed around one of your cat's legs and only takes a few minutes. To ensure



your cat is as calm as possible, this can take place in a quiet room or even while they are still in their own carrier (with the lid removed), so that the reading is as accurate as possible. Your cat may also have an eye examination as changes to the vessels, bleeding or retinal detachment can be signs of high blood pressure.

What is the treatment for high blood pressure?

There are two aims when dealing with a cat with high blood pressure. The first is to reduce the blood pressure using medication. This will ensure that further organ damage does not occur.

Secondly, further tests will be needed to ensure there is no underlying disease such as chronic kidney disease, which has caused the high blood pressure.