

My cat is losing weight – is it just “old age”?

Unexplained weight loss is usually caused by illness. Older cats are at increased risk of developing a range of illnesses, but don't worry – we can diagnose and treat these illnesses in all cats, regardless of their age.

Diabetes

Affected cats usually lose weight despite having a big appetite and tend to drink a lot more. Diagnosis requires a blood test, and treatment usually requires injections of insulin. Some cats in the early stages of type II diabetes may be managed with a special diet instead.

Overactive thyroid

An overactive thyroid sends the cat's metabolism into overdrive, resulting in weight loss despite an increased appetite. Affected cats may also have poor coat condition, diarrhoea or restlessness. This condition is diagnosed with a blood test, and usually treated with liquid or tablet medication. Other treatments (such as diet change, surgery or radiation therapy) may be more suitable in some cases.

Kidney disease

Cat with kidney disease may have increased thirst, reduced appetite, vomiting, and weight loss. Kidney disease can often not be cured but diagnosing it at an early stage (usually with blood and urine tests) is important. By altering the diet to give the kidneys less work to do, and using medication, we can slow down the progression of the kidney disease and allow cats to live a good quality of life, often for many years.

Arthritis

Cats with arthritis will often have muscle loss around the hindquarters and be less keen to jump up onto furniture. Anti-inflammatory medication relieves discomfort and encourages cats to use their legs properly again and build the muscle back up. Physiotherapy can also be helpful.

Dental disease

Sore teeth or gums will make eating difficult and weight loss may result. Extracting broken or loose teeth may be necessary, and gum disease may be managed with anti-inflammatories and antibiotics.

Summary

There are many reasons why an older cat may begin to lose weight. At Acorn House we have a team of caring and experienced veterinary surgeons and nurses to help you to help your pet.