



THE FELINER

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A MAGRANE PET MEDICAL CENTER INSERT FOR CAT LOVERS, FALL 2014



by Vikky Warner

Dear Opie,

How can I tell if my cat is overweight?

At Magrane, there is a score card for determining a cat's body image. By looking at the cat overall, we can then give a body condition score. A score of 5 is "just right".

We start with the cat's ribs. We should be able to feel the ribcage easily. There should be a slight amount of fat, but if you can't feel the ribs at all, your cat is overweight. You should not be able to easily see the ribs, because then your cat would be too thin.

Second, we look at the area near the base of the tail. There should be a slight fat covering over this area and it should feel smooth. If your cat feels boney in this area then he is too thin; if you cannot feel any bones at all, then he is overweight.

Third, feel other bony areas on your cat's body such as the spine, shoulders, and hips. You should be able to feel a small amount of fat over these areas. If you cannot feel the bones, the cat is overweight. If you can easily feel or see these bones under the skin, your cat is too thin.

Fourth, we look at your cat from above. There should be a definite waist behind the ribs. If we cannot see a definite waist, or if the ribcage and or hips are wider, your cat is definitely overweight!

Finally, we look at the cat from the side. The area behind the ribs should be smaller in diameter than the chest. Overweight animals will have no abdominal tuck.

Obesity in cats can cause many health concerns such as liver and heart disease, and diabetes, to name a few. As your cat ages, arthritis can be an issue and carrying around the extra weight puts even more of a burden on the joints. If your cat has some extra pounds that it is carrying around, call us for help weight reduction.

--Best regards,

Opie Warner

FVRCP – A CORE VACCINATION FOR YOUR CAT

Many of us are familiar with the idea that the only care needed by cats is feeding – sometimes on the back steps where stray cats gather. And when we take a cat into our homes, many of us assume that feeding, plus the addition and maintenance of a litter box, are the only things we need to do for our pet cats. Then, when our pet cats become ill, we wonder (too late) what other care our cats require.

Many of you know that the Rabies vaccination is required by law in Indiana for all cats over twelve weeks old. At Magrane, our veterinarians agree with several national organizations dedicated to cat care (AAHA, AAFP, AVMA) that a second core vaccination, the FVRCP, is necessary as well.

The highly effective FVRCP vaccine protects against three viruses: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia. All three viruses are potentially life-threatening to your cat, and can be contracted by cats of any age. These viruses are highly contagious, even through screened windows, if unvaccinated cats visit the neighborhood where you live.

The FVRCP is a “live” vaccine, and should not be given to pregnant cats. However, healthy kittens should receive their first FVRCP vaccine as early as six weeks of age, and the vaccination needs to be boosted at least once, or as recommended by your veterinarian, up through the age of 14 to 16 weeks. The reason these ages are so general in this article is that the vaccination age depends on the kittens’ general health and the age at which they were weaned. Adult cats with an unknown vaccination history should receive an FVRCP vaccination plus one booster. Pregnant cats should not be vaccinated with a live FVRCP vaccine in order to avoid damaging the kittens.

The first FVRCP vaccination given should be preceded by a full exam from a veterinarian, and the cat must be monitored afterwards for possible side effects such as fever or vomiting. These effects are rare, and the chance that they will occur is usually outweighed by the benefits of boosting the cat’s immune system against the onset of deadly disease.

At Magrane, we use an FVRCP vaccination that provides protection for three years (after the initial vaccination and booster). If you are unsure about your cat’s need for vaccines, give Magrane a call today! We will look up your record, or for new cats, schedule a visit with one of our expert veterinarians.
