

# FELINE WELLNESS CARE CHECKLIST FOR CAT OWNERS

At **Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic**, we emphasize that annual physical examinations are essential for maintaining your cat's long-term health. Cats are often described as “masters of disguise” — they instinctively hide signs of pain or illness. As a result, conditions such as dental disease, kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, diabetes, or arthritis may advance significantly before obvious symptoms appear.

Preventive care is always superior to reactive care. Waiting until visible symptoms develop can limit treatment options and increase both medical complexity and cost. This Feline Wellness Care Checklist is designed to help cat owners take a proactive role in monitoring health at home and partnering with the Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic team.

If you notice any of the signs listed below, or have concerns about your cat's health, please contact us at **(401) 683-0803**.

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## Feline Wellness Care

### Signs to Monitor at Home

Subtle changes are often the earliest indicators of disease in cats. Consistent observation allows for earlier intervention.

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### Behavioral Changes

#### Hiding or Withdrawal

**What It May Indicate:** Pain, fear, stress, or underlying illness.

#### Increased or Decreased Vocalization

**What It May Indicate:** Discomfort, cognitive changes, thyroid disease, or anxiety.

#### Changes in Activity

**What It May Indicate:** Arthritis, metabolic disease, or systemic illness. Examples include decreased play, reluctance to jump, or sleeping significantly more than usual.

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### Physical Changes

## **Appetite and Thirst**

**Monitor For:** Increased or decreased food and water intake.  
Changes may signal kidney disease, diabetes, or gastrointestinal issues.

## **Weight Changes**

**Monitor For:** Unexplained weight loss or gain.  
Even gradual weight loss can indicate serious disease in cats.

## **Litter Box Habits**

**Monitor For:** Straining to urinate, increased frequency, accidents outside the box, or changes in stool.  
Urinary obstruction is a medical emergency, particularly in male cats.

## **Grooming Habits**

**Monitor For:** Greasy or matted coat, excessive grooming, or lack of grooming.  
Cats in pain often groom less; anxious cats may over-groom.

## **Oral Health**

**Monitor For:** Bad breath, drooling, difficulty eating.  
Dental disease is extremely common in adult cats and can lead to systemic complications.

## **Lumps or Bumps**

**Monitor For:** New growths or changes in existing masses.  
Regularly run your hands gently over your cat's body to detect abnormalities early.

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# **What to Discuss during Your Cat's Wellness Visit at Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic**

Routine feline wellness care extends far beyond vaccinations. Each visit is an opportunity for individualized preventive planning, early disease detection, chronic disease monitoring, and client education.

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## **Preventive Care**

### **Vaccinations**

Review core and lifestyle-based vaccines appropriate for your cat's age and environment.

## **Parasite Prevention**

Discuss year-round protection against fleas, ticks, and heartworm — even for indoor cats.

## **Routine Diagnostics**

Ask about baseline bloodwork, urinalysis, fecal testing, and blood pressure monitoring. Routine screening often detects disease before clinical signs develop.

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## **Specific Health Concerns**

### **Nutrition and Weight Management**

Discuss life-stage appropriate diets, caloric intake, and body condition scoring. Obesity significantly increases risk for diabetes and arthritis.

### **Dental Health**

Review professional cleaning recommendations and at-home dental care options.

### **Behavioral Concerns**

Address new or concerning behaviors such as aggression, anxiety, litter box avoidance, or stress-related behaviors.

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## **General Health Planning**

### **Home Wellness Plan**

Work with your veterinarian to create a customized preventive care plan based on age, lifestyle, and medical history.

### **Medication Guidance**

Ask for clarification on medication administration techniques and strategies to reduce stress during dosing.

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## **Reducing Stress: Getting Your Cat to the Vet**

We recognize that transporting cats to veterinary appointments can be challenging. Stress during transport is one of the primary reasons routine care is delayed. Unfortunately, postponing visits can create a cycle where veterinary care is associated only with emergencies.

Below are strategies to make visits less stressful:

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## **Before the Trip**

### **Carrier Preparation**

Leave the carrier out year-round with a soft blanket and treats inside so your cat associates it with safety rather than travel.

### **Pheromone Support**

Use a feline pheromone spray such as **Feliway** on bedding 15–30 minutes before travel to reduce anxiety.

### **Practice Runs**

For highly anxious cats, short car rides can help desensitize them to motion.

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## **During Transport**

### **Cover the Carrier**

Place a towel over the carrier to reduce visual stimulation and increase security.

### **Secure the Carrier**

Position the carrier flat on the vehicle floor or secure it with a seatbelt to prevent movement.

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## **At the Clinic**

Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic utilizes low-stress, cat-friendly handling techniques to improve comfort and reduce anxiety during exams.

### **Calming Aids**

For extremely anxious cats, discuss pre-visit anxiolytics or mild sedation options prior to the appointment.

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## **Our Commitment**

At Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic, our goal is to partner with you in delivering comprehensive, preventive feline care tailored to your cat's unique needs. Early detection and proactive management significantly improve both longevity and quality of life.

To schedule your cat's wellness exam, please contact us at **(401) 683-0803**.

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## **Sources**

- The veterinarians at Portsmouth Veterinary Clinic
- Veterinary Information Network (Veterinary Partner)
- American Animal Hospital Association
- American Veterinary Medical Association