



Good health signs and warning signs to spot in your cat

It can be hard to spot if your cat is feeling poorly, which makes it vital for owners to be educated and aware of the danger signs. It also helps to understand how a healthy, thriving cat acts.

Head Vet of the Cat Protection Society of Victoria, Dr. Peta Keown believes it is imperative that pet owners are familiar with their cat's behaviour so they can easily pick up on clues when things aren't quite right.

"Besides looking out for obvious physical signs, being aware and in tune with your cat's consistent behaviour and personality is extremely important. It helps you to identifying signals and behaviours that may signify that something is wrong," Dr Keown said.

Here are some signs that show your cat is in good health:

A Good Weight

A healthy body weight indicates your cat has a good appetite as well as energy to play and engage.

Clear Eyes

Bright and clear eyes are a sign your cat is healthy.

"No mucky discharge in the eyes is a reassuring sign that your cat is in good health," Dr Keown said.

Good Eating and Drinking Habits

Dr Keown says, "a good appetite is always a great sign, as well as consistent eating and drinking."

Regular Toileting Habits

Peeking into your cat's kitty litter may not be anybody's idea of fun but it is important to be aware of your cat's toileting habits. Small, firm stools can be a sign their digestive system is in good order.

A Shiny Coat

A shiny coat that is well groomed is another good sign. The coat should always be smooth and free from dandruff.

Interactive and Engaged

Not all cats like engaging with their owners 24 hours a day, but a thriving cat is one that is actively engaged in life.

"It is not just physical signs that show us the cat is healthy, their behaviour is a good indication too," said Dr Keown.

"Cats that happily interact with their surrounds and people around them are often very healthy felines."

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However, there are some warning signs you can look out for:

Loss of Appetite

If a cat goes off its food, making them eat less or not at all, this can be a sign that something isn't right.

Weight Loss

It is important to be observant of any weight fluctuations.

"Weight loss is another sign and often alerts us that something is chronically wrong," Dr Keown said.

Changed Toileting Habits

A change in toileting habits is a key sign something is not quite right. This could present itself in the form of:

Diarrhea:

This can be caused by a host of factors including bacteria, viruses, internal parasites, toxic substances or anxiety.

Constipation:

Some of the factors that cause constipation include ingesting substances such as hair, bones or foreign materials, disease or dehydration.

Abnormal Urination:

Straining to urinate or blood in the urine may indicate a urinary tract infection. Likewise, an increase in urine volume may indicate an organ or endocrine disease

Vomiting:

It is not uncommon for a cat to vomit but frequent and persistent vomiting is not normal and should be investigated.

Poor Grooming and an unhealthy looking coat

Red flags include dryness, dandruff, excess greasiness and bald or thinning patches.

"This is often a sign of poor health and can present in senior cats due to conditions such as arthritis or hormonal changes," Dr Keown said.

Changes in Behaviour

Dr Keown said "Behavioural differences, such as cats withdrawing and not wanting to participate as well as hiding away in places such as the wardrobe, are something to be aware of."

She advises owners who notice any of the warning signs above to visit their vet.

"You should not hesitate to visit your vet if you witness any changes to your cat's usual behaviour, or if they display any red flags," she said.

She also believes there are practical steps that owners can take each day to ensure their cat remains in the best health possible.

"Feeding your cat a good quality, premium, complete and well balanced cat food should not require supplements as it contains all of the vitamins and nutrients a cat should need. You should also keep up your cats' vaccinations up to date and apply flea and worm preventions. Spending quality time with your cat each day is also very important," she said.

"Never be afraid to visit your vet if you are even slightly concerned and make sure you communicate all your worries to them," she said.

"Cats don't always make it easy when determining if they are unwell and will try to hide it for as long as possible. It is important to be on the front foot and visit your vet as soon as any warning signs present," Dr Keown said.

