

Felines need to be seen every year

But my cat's has never been sick! He's been healthy as a rock!

Maybe.

And this is probably one of the saddest truths about feline internal medicine. Cats have a wonderful masking effect. A masking effect is a mechanism of defense that animals use to mislead a possible predator. Despite any sickness or injury, these animals will look “healthy”.

So even though a family cat has been apparently healthy most of his/her life, the feline may have an underlying condition. Many cat owners ask me with big surprise why all the sudden their cat is so sick! When it seemed fine last week!

Well, by the time a cat shows signs of illness, this illness it's at an advanced stage or worse, terminal.

I need to see your cat every year for the first 8 years and after that every 6 months. Let's remember that cats age a lot faster than us. A cat without medical care for years would be analogous of you and I going to our doctor every 10 years.

During an annual physical exam, I will weight your cat, listen to the heart and lungs to ensure there are no abnormalities. Also, I will palpate the abdomen to rule out any mass like structures, gas, thickened bowels and bladder abnormalities.

Please call me immediately if you see that the feline is not eating, hiding, drinking more water than normal, urinating more or not urinating (this is an emergency and I need to see your cat now!), vomiting, coughing, and any other symptom that are not consistent to your cat's normal behavior.

The most concerning conditions that I find in felines are chronic renal disease, liver insufficiency, hyperthyroidism, inflammatory bowel syndrome, pancreatitis, dental disease, stomatitis (inflammation of the gums) and neoplasia.

Many of these commonly diagnosed conditions can be caught at earlier stages with prompt medical intervention.

Our lovely felines provide us with unforgettable moments every day of our lives. So please take a moment in your busy schedule and let's talk about how can we keep our cats living healthier and longer.

Dr. S.