

Event Aims to Get Cats to the Vet

Regular physical exams are vital to feline health and longevity.

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Feline veterinarian Michele Gaspar partnered with Feline Pine to promote a campaign that highlights the importance of regular veterinary checkups for cats. Following a recent survey that showed a significant number of cat owners are not bringing their cats to the vet regularly, Feline Pine, a cat litter company, partnered with board-certified feline specialist Michele Gaspar, DVM, and the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in Chicago, to establish National Take Your Cat to the Vet Day. The inaugural event will take place Aug. 22, 2009.

In the survey, which was conducted online, more than one-third of the 726 respondents claimed to only bring their cats to the veterinarian when they are sick. A mere 17 percent of those surveyed had their cats regularly vaccinated against diseases such as rabies and distemper.

"There is a misconception that cats are independent and they don't need the level of care that dogs do," Gaspar said. "Cats also don't show disease well. We can have cats who look normal when they're covering up a serious illness."

Gaspar noted that in the past 10 years, veterinary medicine has shifted from being largely about vaccines to focusing more on the physical exam. The Feline Pine survey showed that more than one-third of respondents believe that their cats do not need vaccinations because they do not go outside. Gaspar says that this belief often results in owners not bringing their cats to the vet at all.

"There's been a redirection of focus so we put these cats in for the physical exam and the vaccines follow," Gaspar said.

National Take Your Cat to the Vet day is intended to shift the mindset of cat owners.

"It's a national awareness that we're trying to create," Gaspar said. "What better way to set the stage for health than to get that kitty to the veterinarian for an exam?"

Cat owners can visit Feline Pine's website for more information.