

Vet Offers Tips to Keep Cats Healthy

CatChannel Veterinary Expert and CAT FANCY Contributing Editor Arnold Plotnick, of Manhattan Cat Specialists, recommends regular check-ups to screen for common feline health risks.

Posted: June 21, 2007, 5 a.m. EDT

With concern for pet cats' health heightened after the recent pet food recall, owners should talk to their veterinarians about how to prevent and treat other feline health risks, said Arnold Plotnick, DVM. Three risks of particular concern include heartworm, oral disease and diseases such as feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

"Cats are said to have nine lives, but owners should know that regular wellness check-ups are the best way to ensure their feline friend is healthy in all nine of them," Plotnick said. "Wellness check-ups include a full body check, oral exam, vaccinations, parasite screening and blood tests to screen for key health risks."

Those risks include: **Heartworm.** Cats are at as much risk to develop heartworm as dogs, Plotnick said, with indoor cats being at risk, too. Heartworm season varies by region and is found in all 50 states. **Infectious Diseases.** Up to one-third of pet cats may be at risk for FeLV and FIV, and may not show any outward symptoms. "Testing and detection can really help your cat live a long, happy life," Plotnick said. "There are many success stories to prove it." **Oral Disease.** To help prevent oral disease in your cat, Plotnick recommended brushing your cat's teeth at home. "Ask your vet to show you how to brush your kitty's teeth," he said. "When it comes to your pet's health, your veterinarian is the best information source."