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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 22nd: National Take Your Cat to the Vet Day

by

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Did you know that Vermonters have the highest percentage of households with cats in the United States? It's true - we love our feline friends. One action you can take for your beloved cat (besides buying a new toy that they will ignore and play with a paper bag instead) which will keep it happy and healthy have a wellness exam done, yearly. There is no better time to schedule your appointment for a check up than now: August 22nd is National Take Your Cat to the Vet Day. Regular checkups are part of being a responsible caregiver. They can help avoid medical emergencies by detecting conditions or diseases before they become significant, painful, or costlier to treat.

Cats are masters of hiding illness and pain. A physical exam by your veterinarian, who is trained to detect subtle signs of disease, is essential to keeping your cat happy and healthy. During the checkup, your veterinarian will review your cat's nutrition, lifestyle, environmental enrichment (key resources such as food, water, litter box, scratching areas, play areas, resting areas, etc.), disease and parasite prevention, and behavior. This is also the perfect time for you to ask questions and share any changes in your cat's behavior. Even very minor changes could be a sign of a medical issue.

A common misconception is that 'indoors only' cats don't need regular check-ups. There are many reasons why they do! Cats age more rapidly than humans, and checkups are crucial because a lot can happen in a "cat year". By the time your cat is 8-year-old, it would be 48 in human years, which is a long time to go without having an exam. "Indoor only" cats can still develop heart disease, obesity, asthma, diabetes,

kidney disease, and so many other diseases that can only be detected by a thorough exam by your veterinarian.

Two major sources of pain that any cat can develop (which they are good at hiding), regardless of indoors or outdoors dental pain and arthritis. Did you know cats have 30 teeth? That's a lot of potential for problems! In fact, dental disease is the most common disease in cats 3 years and older. Often there aren't any obvious signs and the cat will still eat without a noticeable change in appetite. This doesn't mean there is not dental pain- it's just that the cat is good at hiding it. (If you've ever had a cavity, you know it hurts all of the time, but you still do eat your meals.) Arthritis is extremely common in cats over 10, and cats will often not limp – they will just “slow down” and be less active. Because it hurts. This is often attributed to age, but in fact it is pain for which your veterinarian can evaluate and formulate a plan to alleviate it.

One obstacle we can all empathize with is the dreaded cat carrier. So many of us are reluctant to bring the cat in to the vet because we can't get the cat there safely. This is a valid concern, as without being in a carrier, a cat running loose in your car risks being killed in a car accident or escaping from the car. At the same time, none of us wants to fight the unwilling cat! An excellent resource on getting your cat into the carrier and to the vet is the website of the American Association of Feline Practitioners, www.catvets.com and choose cat care at home--how to get your cat to the veterinarian. If you don't have internet access then give your veterinarian a call and discuss they can help you.

We know you love your cats and want to have your beloved feline friends around for a long time. Yearly physical exams are the best way to do it. Call your vet today and schedule a check-up. For more information on why yearly cat visits are essential for your cat, go to www.catvets.com.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA) is a professional organization of 380 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.