

Is Your Cat in Pain?

Its Behavior May Tell

Cats feel pain for many of the same reasons as humans: arthritis, bone disease, cancer, dental problems, and infections. They also feel discomfort following surgical procedures. Unfortunately, unlike humans, cats are unable to speak to us about when and where they hurt.

Look for the subtle changes in behavior that may indicate your cat is in pain. By staying alert to these signs, your cat's pain can be diagnosed and treated sooner so they can heal and resume a normal, happy life, more quickly.

If your cat shows one or more of these behaviors and you suspect it may be due to pain, notify your veterinarian immediately. If your family veterinarian is unavailable, MedVet is here to help.

Activity Level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiding• Aggressive• Changing position frequently• Licking at wounds• Licking lips and or salivating• Head down	Palpation of Wound or Affected Area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biting, aggression• Quick turning, flinching• Vocalization
Daily Habits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoids people• Avoids petting	Posture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crouched and/or hunched• Stretched out or tucked up• Tense, stiff, rigid
Facial Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head down• Squinting, slanted, or closed eyes• Whiskers pulled back	Vocalizing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growl and/or hiss• Long deep meow• Monotonous or incessant purring

Adapted from Assessment of Acute Pain in Cats | Sheilah Robertson, BVMS (Hons), PhD, MRCVS, Diplomate ECVA, ACVAA, ACAW, & ECAWBM (Welfare Science, Ethics and Law)
Michigan State University | January/February 2014 | Today's Veterinary Practice