

How to Estimate the Age of Cats in Human Years

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Q. How do I determine the age of my cat?

A. Except in young cats, determining the age of a cat is an 'educated guess,' at best. The age of kittens up to 4 months of age can be determined by which temporary and permanent teeth are present.

Using radiographs (x-rays), the presence or absence of growth areas of the bones in kittens under 6 months of age can help determine a more exact age.

Radiographs are rarely taken for this purpose, however.

In older cats, age is generally estimated by the wear on the teeth. Unfortunately, this can be influenced by the breed of the cat, the cat's diet, the shape and positioning of the jaws, and the amount of dental care the cat has received.

Cat years in human terms

We often want to think about the age of our cat in human terms. We cannot necessarily say one cat year equals so many human years, since the comparison changes with the age of the cat. The following table provides a comparison of cat and human years.

Cat Years	Human Years
1	15
2	20
3	25
7	45
10	58
15	78
20	98

There is no specific definition of a 'senior' or 'geriatric' cat. In general, cats are considered to be 'senior' when they are 8-10 years of age. Cats over 12 years of age would probably be considered 'geriatric' by most veterinarians. These classifications are rather arbitrary; a cat on his 8th birthday is not suddenly a 'senior.' We need to remember aging is a gradual and lifelong process.

The oldest recorded age of a cat is 34 years.