

Aggression in Senior Cats

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- Q.** As my cat gets older, she has become more aggressive. Is there a reason for this?
- A.** As cats age, they may become aggressive toward people or toward other animals in the household. Especially in older animals, this aggression may be the result of a medical problem, such as one causing pain (arthritis), vision or hearing loss which results in the cat being easily startled, or diseases having direct effects on the nervous system. Stresses, such as moving can cause irritability and subsequent aggression in some cats. A combination of counter-conditioning (teaching the cat a different response when exposed to a certain stimuli), desensitization (gradually reintroducing the cat to the stimuli), and treating any medical conditions may help change the cat's behavior. Consult your veterinarian and an animal behaviorist if your older cat is becoming aggressive.