

## Common Diseases of Senior Cats

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



In [The Aging Process and How We Can Help Older Cats Adapt](#), we explain some of the more common and normal changes we can see in the function of the various organ systems in an older cat. Many of these changes are expected. Disease can occur, however, if these changes become severe and the organ or system is no longer able to compensate. The more common diseases seen in older cats and the signs of these diseases are listed in the table below. Most of the diseases are discussed in detail in separate articles, just one click away.

Common Diseases in Older Cats	Signs and Symptoms of Disease
Cancer	Abnormal swellings that persist or continue to grow Sores that do not heal Weight loss Loss of appetite Bleeding or discharge from any body opening Offensive odor Difficulty eating or swallowing Hesitation to exercise or loss of stamina Difficulty breathing, urinating, or defecating
<a href="#">Dental disease</a>	Bad breath Difficulty eating or swallowing Drooling Food dropping from mouth when eating Weight loss
<a href="#">Hyperthyroidism</a>	Increased activity Increased appetite Weight loss Increased thirst and urination Vomiting Labored or increased rate of respiration Increased heart rate (pulse)

Kidney disease/failure	<p>Increased urination and thirst</p> <p>Weight loss</p> <p>Vomiting</p> <p>Loss of appetite</p> <p>Depression and lethargy</p> <p>Diarrhea</p> <p>Blood in vomit or black, tarry stool</p> <p>Bad breath and oral ulcers</p>
<a href="#">Inflammatory bowel disease</a>	<p>Diarrhea</p> <p>Vomiting</p> <p>Mucous or blood in stool</p> <p>Increased frequency of defecation</p> <p>Defecating outside of litter box</p> <p>Weight loss</p>
<a href="#">Diabetes mellitus</a>	<p>Increased thirst and urination</p> <p>Weight loss or weight gain</p> <p>Decreased activity, weakness</p> <p>Change in appetite</p> <p>Vomiting</p> <p>Walk on their hocks</p>
<a href="#">Obesity</a>	<p>Overweight</p> <p>Exercise intolerance</p> <p>Unkempt hair coat, especially in anal area</p>
<a href="#">Feline hepatic lipidosis</a>	<p>Obese cat with sudden loss of appetite</p> <p>Subsequent weight loss</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Vomiting</p> <p>Yellow gums</p> <p>Behavior changes</p>
Anemia	<p>Exercise intolerance</p> <p>Very light colored gums</p>
Mitral Insufficiency/Heart disease	<p>Exercise intolerance</p> <p>Labored and increased rate of breathing</p> <p>Weight loss</p> <p>Paralysis of rear legs</p>

Liver disease	Vomiting Loss of appetite Diarrhea Abdominal distention Yellow or pale gums Behavior changes Weight loss
Bladder stones	Difficulty urinating Urinating outside the litter box Blood in the urine
<a href="#">Arthritis</a>	Difficulty jumping or climbing stairs Behavior change - irritable, reclusive Urinating or defecating outside of litter box