

# Behavioural Problems

The behavioural changes of senility in cats are well recognised and may include a number of different symptoms. It is important to distinguish if their condition is due to age or a medical problem. A common problem is a growing lethargy leading to a lack of interest in life.

Other more specific indications of senility include sleep disorders, decreased awareness and reaction to sight and sound, loss of appetite, episodes of collapse and loss of house training.

Cats may appear disorientated, or adopt new behaviour like meowing for no reason or sitting in the bath, staring at the wall for long periods.

An older cat may become increasingly irritable, especially if in pain or discomfort and keep this in mind if there are children in the household.

Any changes should be reported, as the vet will be able to determine if the cause is likely to be part of ageing or a medical disorder.

Cats produce harmful free radicals on a daily basis. In young, healthy cats antioxidants neutralise these free radicals and equilibrium occurs. Unfortunately, as animals age, they increasingly produce more free radicals and a decreasing amount of antioxidants.

This leads to an excess of free radicals, which damage the cells especially DNA and the lipid membranes and proteins in the brain. This in turn can lead to the development of disease and related problems.

Treatments are now available that can relieve the old age behaviour - some owners even describe their cats as 'having the tiger put back in them'!

