

# **Owner Awareness Guide Feline Hypertension**

How to make the invisible visible!

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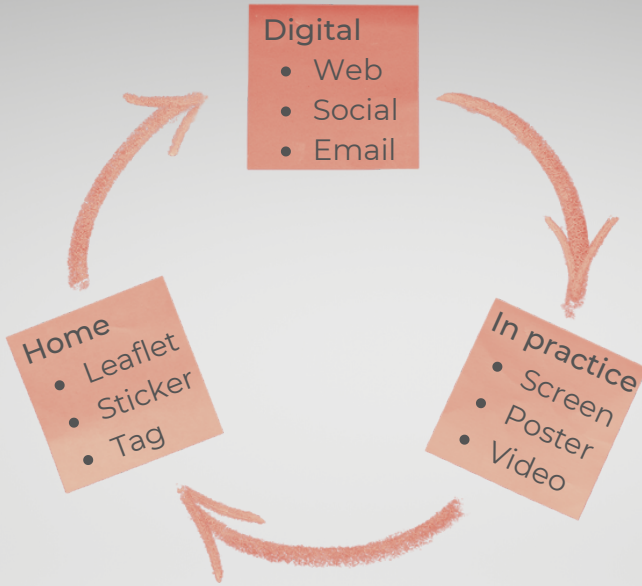
Feline Hypertension is **one of the most common conditions of older cats**. It affects around 1 in 5 cats from 9 years of age. In particular it is commonly diagnosed alongside chronic kidney disease and feline hyperthyroidism.

The challenge is for both clinicians and owners there are **few to no clinical signs of the disease until it is advanced**.

So many cases are missed as other are no clues to prompt owners to bring their cats for a check. Equally it can be easily overlooked in the consult by the practice team too.

The consequences of undiagnosed hypertension are serious. **Most commonly cats present with severe vision loss or even blindness**. Hypertension also causes damage to kidney function and to the brain and heart.

This guide helps to highlight key messages and pictures/videos that can be used to educate owners about the importance of regular blood pressure checks for their cats.



Remember due to the invisible nature of early high blood pressure in cats, it's important that owners are educated regularly and consistently, through a variety of media.

We recommend that there are some visual cues always present in practice (plus incorporating hypertension information in outbound communications like emails and social posts too).

A good rule of thumb is that for any messaging to create a lasting memory someone needs to hear it around 7 times. With no visual signs of early hypertension nearly all of those times will need to be communicated by the practice. It's a challenge and Ceva's hypertension communication guide is here to make life easier.

How many times are pet owners seeing or hearing about hypertension from your clinic?

*To help owners understand the subtle nature of the disease focus on these key topics*

## Occular changes

High blood pressure in cats frequently causes damage to cat's retinas. It's still the most common reason for cats to be identified as hypertensive. The majority of cats with hypertension are still diagnosed too late when vision loss or blindness has already occurred.

### Key Message

- Most cats are diagnosed later in the disease after they already have damage to their eyes. Regular blood pressure checks can prevent this.

### Idea

- Share a case study of a cat from your clinic that may have had this experience. In our experience owners of these cats are motivated to share their stories to help prevent it happening to others. Always get permission before sharing.

## Behaviour changes

You may not know but blood pressure in cats commonly causes changes to the brain. These changes when mild to moderate may cause subtle behaviour changes that could be picked up on with simple behaviour screening questions. Including these in communications could help to identify cats that need their BPs checked sooner. If unmanaged these changes can develop and lead to more serious neurological signs like seizures.

### Idea

- Why not send a questionnaire to your older cat owners to screen for behaviour changes? Click [here](#) for an example form the AAHA

## Routine screening

Did you know diagnosing hypertension in people is just as challenging as in cats. There are campaigns in human medicine to prompt clinicians and patients to get their BPs checked more often. Thankfully in people it's now part of a minimum database for patients undergoing hospital admissions. Perhaps it could be in veterinary hospitals too. It's great to build on owners awareness of BP checks for themselves and relate to their cats.

### Key Messages

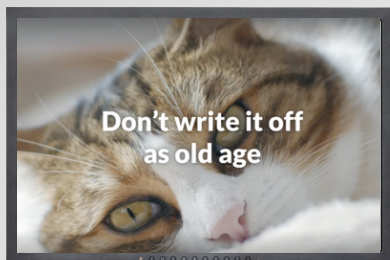
- Just like in people older cats need regular blood pressure checks too

### Idea

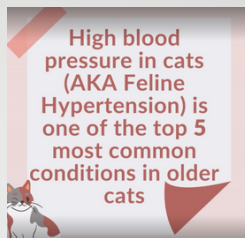
- Why not add a BP field to your procedures admit list as a reminder to take a baseline BP in older cats

This page features some top tips and inspiration for how to ease the pressure and create hypertension awareness in your clinic.

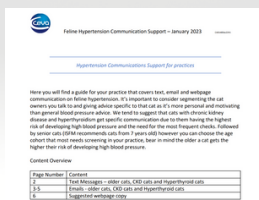
## Digital Materials - Click to find out more



TV content



Social Posts and Videos

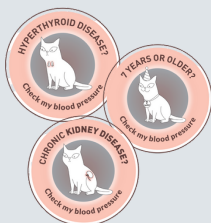


Owner messages - Email and Text

## Print Materials

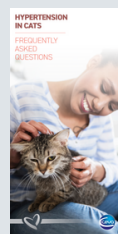
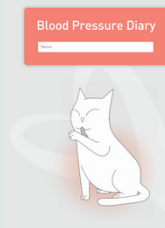
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