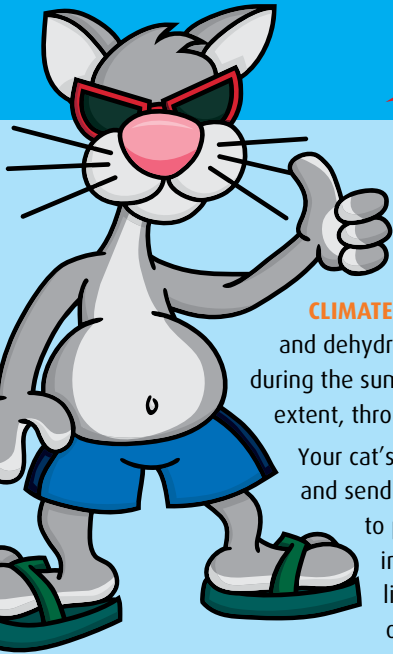


# Dr. Kim's feline mews



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## HOT TIPS FOR COOL CATS



**CLIMATE CHANGE** - believe in it or not, this summer is a hottie. And cats are especially vulnerable to heat stroke and dehydration as they age. Your cat loses as much water through their saliva as they do through their urine during the summer, because they lick themselves to cool off. Cats can only sweat through their footpads, and, to an extent, through panting. However, by the time your cat is panting on a hot day, it is close to heat stroke.

Your cat's kidneys are amazing at concentrating and conserving water, and when all her organs are working well and sending the correct messages to the brain, then, as long as fresh water is available, she will drink enough to prevent dehydration. HOWEVER, as cats get older (and this means from as young as 8 years old), their internal messaging systems can become inefficient. This means that your cat may not detect that their licking themselves to cool off is losing extra water and so they do not drink more. This puts extra strain on their kidneys, which can precipitate kidney failure. Tragic, and we do see it a couple of times each summer.

Air-conditioning is a problem as it dehydrates imperceptibly as well - the dehumidifying effect is the same problem - losing water from the mouth and nose. Old people have similar problems. **WHAT TO DO** - because Prevention is ALWAYS better than cure.

### Awareness

If your cat already has 'renal insufficiency' - detected by a simple urine test which shows the kidneys have lost their reserve so that the concentration of the urine is reduced - then most of these tips will apply. If in doubt - **BOOK A URINE TEST NOW** - any cat over 8 should have their urine tested annually at least. **Phone Dr Kim Cat Vet on 0400 756 331**. Information is ALWAYS worth having.

### Kool your Cat

Fans are better than air-conditioning, but blow them over a bowl of water if possible. Do not blow a fan onto a wet cat directly - you can make them cold too quickly. **Chatswood Cat Central** has some interesting mats called 'Cool Necessities' - a crystal-filled mat that holds water and cools by evaporation for 5 days. 'Cool Necessities' really work - even on people! Also, put your cat's favourite bed in the shade so they sleep there not in the sun.  
**Be inventive and TELL US!**

### Increase Water Intake

Not with salt or additives but straight water - **WET YOUR CAT** if she is lying in the sun. Cats are solar-powered, of course, but if they fall asleep and overheat or dehydrate, they can wake up in trouble. Once they feel sick, they stop drinking and eating and the vicious cycle spins quickly out of control. The next stage is vomiting (particularly fluidy foam rather than bile), and medical attention is required urgently. So - put a wet cloth over your cat, or make their legs wet - they will think you are mad the first time, but as they lick the (extra) water off, they feel better and actually quite enjoy it then. The water is doing three things - cooling the cat, saving their saliva and increasing their intake. You can also offer water in a **Water Fountain** - the running water is attractive to many cats, and rehumidifies the air. **Frozen Treats** - at the zoo they freeze little fish and even kangaroo treats in ice blocks. Licking them cools the cat, while they wait for it to melt so they can eat the treat! Even **freezing stock** - flavoured with 'roo, chicken or tuna - **into ice cubes** and putting them into water is a tasty, watery diversion.