



# Dr. Kim's feline mews



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## Is middle age CATching up with your feline friend?

More cats are living longer because their owners are more attentive to their basic health and behaviour requirements.

Dr Kim is regularly helping owners to manage their venerable feline friends age gracefully into their 'teen' years. A cat who has lived 13 calendar years is metabolically the same as a 70 year old person! By 19, a cat equates to a human over 90 years old! And as with humans, some get there on their own, but more are making the longer journey with the help of medications, lifestyle improvements and good nutrition.

The **BIG THREE** issues for **Senior** cats are **Arthritis, Dental Health and Kidney Function**.

### ARTHRITIS

We used to think that cats did not get **Arthritis**, and that slowing down was just a function of growing old. Now we know that 90% of cats over the age of 10 years have arthritis, and we all appreciate that chronic pain is debilitating. The good news is that there are now some great ways to alleviate that pain, and your oldie will even start playing again! **Dr Barry** offers **Acupuncture**. It is actually called **Aquapuncture** because under sedation / pain relief, he injects Vitamin B12 into the Acupuncture Points. It means your cat only has one visit, is pretty immediately free of pain, and the results usually last 1 to 2 years! 80% of the cats he has treated have done extremely well. In addition, there are Deer Velvet, Green Lip Mussel supplements, safe pain relieving drugs, and a course of injections (Cartrophen - originally developed for racehorses ! but cats benefit as well).

### DENTAL

**Dental deterioration** is the next chronic problem our feline friends have -

basically because they don't brush their teeth, fluoride does not help them, and only catching and eating mice is preventative (truly - ask Dr Kim next time). Because those germs in the mouth affect a cat's whole body, it puts pressure on the immune system and the kidneys in particular, plus bad teeth are sore. Major dental work involves removing those teeth before the root abscesses cause bigger problems. Removing all the back teeth (the canines or long front teeth remain for face shape and defence) results in longer kidney life, reduced pain and much better breath! Human periodontists have proved that taking out all the teeth of homeless people - whose dental hygiene is probably about the same as cats' - results in a lot fewer trips to hospital, and much better heart health (the human weak point). Cats are just as keen to stay away from hospital, and a 'caudal clearance' helps them to do that.

### KIDNEYS

Kidneys are a cat's weak point. 50% of cats die of kidney failure, and the other half from cancer (with a few from heart problems). Now that there is so much more we can do to help keep feline kidneys functioning for longer, the cats just keep on going! Dr Kim likes to regularly check kidney function with urine tests and blood pressure measurements (yes, Dr Kim measures BP with paediatric cuffs and a special doppler machine!). The procedures are painless - the cats think it is strange but they rarely object. They must know it is for their own good! Managing blood pressure with drugs, and changing the diet to help the kidneys function better, has resulted in many venerable souls living a very high quality of life for many extra years!



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