

## Old Cats and Good Vets for Old Cats

Sometimes a fair and reasonable question like “Is the Vet any good with old cats?” is really hard to answer because there are a lot of areas a vet could be “good”. Practicality, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, experience, staying current, arcane techniques? For example, it’s one thing to know how to diagnose the actual degree of kidney impairment with lohexol GFR clearance tests, but another thing to know if those type tests have realistic relevance to the prognosis or management of the case?

1. Does the vet have sensitivity to the concept that spending \$5,000 on an elective or futile treatment for a 17+ year old cat might trigger the Law of Diminishing Returns?
2. If a budget is limited, do they have more sensible or economical workarounds to achieve or accomplish comfort and quality of life or are they stranded without a CT Scan or double-contrast-cysto-urethrography?
3. How much experience do they have in either practice in-general, or with elderly cats?
4. Does the Vet stay current? For example, are they aware that FIP is now a curable disease? And how to achieve that?
5. Does the Vet read and stay current on which vaccines ACTUALLY work and which ones are actually contraindicated in the geriatric?
6. Does the Vet possess insight into management (reasonably) of conditions prevalent in elderly cats such as the very-common renal impairment, or osteo-arthritis?
7. Does the Vet have specialized training (A residency, American Association of Feline Practitioners, A jam-packed catalogue of taken specialty courses?)
8. Does the Vet have the appropriate “relevant” gear for feline practice like Doppler and blood pressure instruments?

The candidate-Vet should be walking around with the following (and more) in their head as ‘walking-talking’ cat practitioner stuff.

- What is an SDMA test?
- What test would always be paired with SDMA testing?
- What would you be testing for with an SDMA test?
- How is an SDMA test relevant, and to what?
- Is FIP treatable?
- What is the most effective way to manage a hyperthyroid cat?
- When would that be practical in a cat with hyperthyroidism?
- When is a test for low thyroid indicated for a feline patient?
- Is FIP curable?
- What medications if any are used against FIP?
- Is prednisone effective in cats?
- What is AIM Protein? What does it do?
- What’s the leading cause of vomiting in cats over 12 years old?
- Why is the FIP vaccine **not generally recommended** by AAHA/AAFP

