Oak Forest
veterinary hospital

PET TALK FALL 2026

grooming your cat
why it matters for feline health

Cats are famous for grooming themselves, but that doesn't mean they don't need your help. Regular grooming does a lot more than keep your cat looking gorgeous: It prevents painful mats, cuts down on hairballs, and gives you a chance to spot lumps, fleas, or skin and ear problems before they become bigger issues. Brushing also helps distribute natural oils through the coat, which keeps skin healthy and fur shiny, and it can strengthen the bond between you and your cat when done gently and positively.

How often should you brush? For most short-haired cats, once a week is usually enough to keep shedding and mats under control. Long-haired breeds such as Persians or Maine Coons benefit from brushing two to three times a week since their fur tangles more easily. Senior cats or cats with health issues may need more frequent brushing because they often groom themselves less effectively.



If your cat isn't a fan of the brush, you're not alone — plenty of cats need some convincing. Start with short sessions, just a minute or two, and pair brushing with something your cat loves, like treats or gentle praise. Choose a calm time, such as after a meal or during a nap, rather than when your cat is already wound up. Soft-bristle brushes or grooming gloves tend to be gentler and less intimidating than metal combs. If your cat still won't cooperate, don't force it — try again another day, and consider asking your vet or a professional groomer for tips tailored to your cat's temperament. With patience, most cats eventually learn to tolerate, and even enjoy, a good grooming session.

don't leaf me itchy!
a fall honk from Goose

Honk, honk! Goose here–Dr. Moore's favorite four-legged family member. (Knox, Diana and Emmitt may disagree, but this is my newsletter.)



Fall is coming, and that means cooler walks, crunchy leaves, and more time outside. But before you start celebrating sweater weather, let's talk about something decidedly less fun: **itchy season!**

Fall allergies can leave us pets scratching, licking, chewing our paws, shaking our heads, or dealing with red, irritated skin. And yes, even though Diana and Emmitt insist cats are far too sophisticated for such problems, allergies can bother them too.

Keep an eye (or a nose) out for:

- Excessive scratching or licking
- Red or irritated skin
- Paw chewing
- Head shaking or itchy ears
- Hair loss or recurring skin and ear infections

Environmental allergens like pollen, grass, mold, and other seasonal triggers can make sensitive pets miserable. And here in Houston, our warm weather means allergy season doesn't always follow the calendar!

If your pet is scratching more than usual, don't just blame the leaves. Dr. Moore and the team at Oak Forest Veterinary Hospital can help determine what's causing the itch and recommend ways to provide relief.
After all, fall should be spent sniffing leaves not scratching all day.

Stay cozy, stay itch-free, and I'll see you next time!

Goose
Chief Honking Officer

kitty care 101
when to take your cat to the vet

Knowing when your cat needs a vet visit isn't always straightforward. Sometimes it's obvious, but cats are famous for masking illness, so the warning signs can be subtle. There are some situations that should always prompt a call to us, whether your cat appears sick or not.

Changes around the litter box deserve quick attention. Frequent trips with little urine produced, straining, or accidents outside the box can point to a urinary tract issue — and if it goes untreated, it can progress to kidney failure. Similarly, ongoing vomiting, diarrhea, or a cat that hovers over the food or water bowl without actually eating or drinking are signs of a digestive problem. Watch closely for signs of pain, too. Because cats naturally hide discomfort, things like vocalizing unexpectedly, moving stiffly or reluctantly, or acting out of character are often the clearest clues that something is wrong.



If your cat has been in a scuffle with another animal, don't brush it off — bite and scratch wounds can transmit disease even when they look minor. The same urgency applies if your cat may have swallowed something toxic; poisoning symptoms can take time to appear, so it's best not to wait and see. Any new lumps, swelling, discoloration, hair loss, or wounds on the skin or coat warrant a prompt visit as well.

Don't overlook your cat's mouth — trouble chewing, persistent bad breath, or bleeding gums can signal dental disease which, left untreated, affects far more than just the teeth. Routine dental cleanings go a long way toward heading off bigger problems down the road.

Every cat, even one that seems perfectly healthy, needs an annual wellness exam. It's the best way to catch problems early, before they become serious. Meanwhile, always call us if you suspect your cat has a health issue!

bloat and gastric torsion
know the warning signs

Bloat starts when a dog's stomach fills up with air, food, or fluid, often because they gulped their meal too fast or swallowed a lot of air along the way. It's more serious than a simple stomachache. In some cases, the swollen stomach twists on itself, cutting off blood flow and trapping everything inside. Vets call this gastric dilatation-volvulus, or GDV, and it's a true emergency. Without prompt treatment, it's often fatal, though dogs who get to surgery quickly have a strong chance of recovery.

Watch for a hard, swollen belly, dry heaving (unproductive vomiting), heavy drooling, restlessness, rapid or labored breathing, pale gums, and general weakness or collapse. Any of these signs, especially in combination, means an immediate trip to the vet or emergency clinic — this isn't something to wait out overnight.



Large, deep-chested breeds face the highest risk, including Great Danes, Saint Bernards, Mastiffs, Doberman Pinschers, German Shepherds, and Weimaraners, though it can happen to any dog. Risk also increases with age, particularly after age 9.

To lower the odds, feed two or three smaller meals per day instead of one large meal, skip vigorous exercise right after eating, and limit big gulps of water around mealtimes. Slow-feeder bowls can help dogs who eat too fast. For high-risk breeds, ask your vet about a preventive procedure that surgically tacks the stomach in place. It won't stop bloating itself, but it dramatically lowers the odds of a life-threatening twist. Always let us know if your dog is showing signs of bloat.

info@OakForestVet.com www.OakForestVet.com

Call (713) 682-6351 today to make an appointment!

collapsing trachea: a common problem in small breed dogs

If you share your home with a small dog, you may have heard a strange, honking cough that sounds a bit like a goose. It's one of the classic signs of tracheal collapse, and while episodes are usually short, they can be alarming to observe.

The trachea is the tube that carries air to and from the lungs, normally held open by flexible, C-shaped rings of cartilage. When those rings weaken, the airway narrows, and your dog may need to gasp or honk to push air through. Along with the goose-honk cough, you might notice labored breathing, reduced stamina during exercise, or coughing fits triggered by eating, drinking, excitement, or play. Heat, humidity, excess weight, and airborne irritants like smoke tend to make things worse.



Vets aren't entirely sure what causes tracheal collapse, but genetics appear to play a role. It can show up at any age and tends to worsen over time. Toy and small breeds are affected most often, including Yorkshire Terriers, Pomeranians, Shih Tzus, Maltese and Chihuahuas.

X-rays can sometimes catch tracheal narrowing; however, fluoroscopy, which captures the airway in motion, often gives a clearer picture. The good news is that most cases respond well to medical management, including anti-inflammatory medications, cough suppressants, and antibiotics if infection is involved. When medication isn't enough, dogs may be candidates for a tracheal stent — a flexible mesh tube placed through the mouth that holds the airway open without invasive surgery. Newer stent materials have made this option safer and more durable than older versions.

At home, weight loss, calm exercise routines, and switching from a collar to a harness can all ease pressure on the trachea and reduce flare-ups. Staying calm during a coughing episode and speaking to them in a soothing manner is important, since anxiety can make symptoms worse. Let us know if your dog shows any of these signs.

Refer a Friend and Save!

Refer a new client and save $10 on your next doctor's visit.

Be sure to mention the refer-a-friend savings when you make your appointment.

OAK FOREST VETERINARY HOSPITAL

When you're here, you're family.

2120 W. 34th Street
Houston, TX 77018

www.OakForestVet.com

Download Our App

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Microchip Savings
$10 Savings
on Microchipping
(includes registration in the national database)
Increase the likelihood that your pet will be returned to you!
Not valid with any other offer. Expires 12/15/2026.

Senior Wellness Savings
$20 Savings
for Canine and Feline
Senior Wellness Profile - includes bloodwork, urinalysis and thyroid check
Not valid with any other offer. Expires 12/15/2026.

Drop-off Savings
Save 5%
on morning drop-offs for "routine" veterinary services.
Expires 12/15/2026.

Get Access to Your Pet's Records!

Call (713) 682-6351
to make an appointment!



your pet
our passion

Call (713) 682-6351 to schedule an appointment today!

OAK FOREST VETERINARY HOSPITAL

When you're here, you're family.