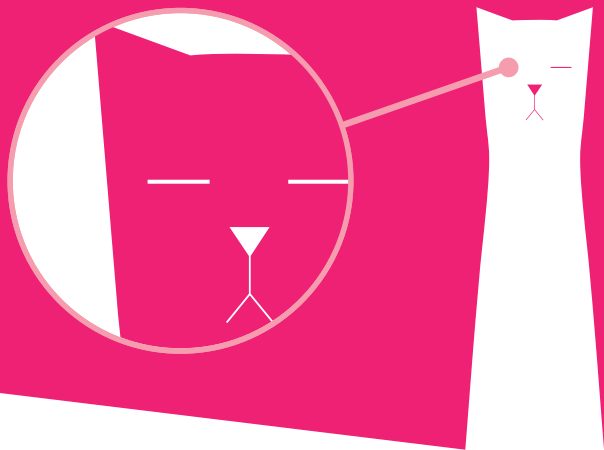


Blind cats



CATS PROTECTION
VETERINARY GUIDES



Depending on the cause, blindness can be partial or complete and can be reversible or permanent. If your cat is blind he will adapt very well to the loss of sight and can live a perfectly happy, healthy life. Blind cats compensate for their lack of sight by using their other senses more.

What causes blindness?

Some of the most common causes of blindness include:

- cataracts (when the eye lens becomes opaque) – as a result of an injury to the eye, diabetes or an inherited problem
- glaucoma or increased pressure in the eye – as a consequence of an injury, tumour or inherited disease
- high blood pressure resulting in detachment of the retina – often caused by an overactive thyroid gland or kidney disease
- degeneration of the retina – can be caused by dietary problems, toxins, infection or inherited disease
- dry eye, as a consequence of feline herpes virus, or an eye injury
- tumours in one or both eyes
- injury

If your cat is suffering from one or more of these conditions, he will usually require regular check-ups with your vet.

What are the signs that my cat is going blind?

The first signs you will usually notice if your cat is going or has gone blind include:

- bumping into things, particularly furniture that has been moved – this may be more apparent at night or in low light
- disorientation or change in normal behaviour
- if blind in one eye, a cat may be startled by sudden movements on their blind side
- a change in appearance of the eye – it may become enlarged, cloudy or change colour
- swelling or discharge from the eye
- pain in the eye – your cat may resent being stroked on the head or face or may squint and try to keep the eye closed



How do I help my blind cat adapt?

A blind cat can become disorientated easily. Certain precautions will help ensure that your cat adapts to the blindness as smoothly as possible. Here are a few tips:

Going outside

Cats Protection recommends that you do not let blind cats roam for their own safety. Keep your cat indoors unless he has access to a safely-fenced garden or run. Your cat may enjoy walking in the garden using a harness and lead, but make sure he is wearing a properly-fitted collar with a safety catch stating his address and disability in case he escapes.

Finding his bearings

Try to encourage your cat to walk around on his own as carrying him may cause him to become disorientated. Cats have scent glands on their paws that allow them to leave a trail of scent to follow – this is even more important for blind cats. If you do have to carry him, always put him back down somewhere familiar.

Approaching your cat

Talk to your cat as you approach him to avoid startling him. If your cat is blind in one eye, try to approach him from the side he has sight in.

Getting around

As blind cats rely on scent and memory to find their way around, you should avoid moving furniture, food and litter trays. Don't leave obstacles in unexpected places where your cat could walk into them. If you have stairs, place a barrier across them until your cat knows where they are and learns to use them again.

Play and exercise

Sound is obviously very important to a blind cat so he may enjoy playing with 'jingly' toys. It is important to encourage him to exercise so that he does not become overweight.

This leaflet is one of a range provided by Cats Protection on issues surrounding cat care.

Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity and helps more than 193,000 cats and kittens each year. We rely entirely on public generosity to finance this vital welfare work.

For more information on **adopting a cat**, **volunteering for us** or **making a donation**, visit **www.cats.org.uk**



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