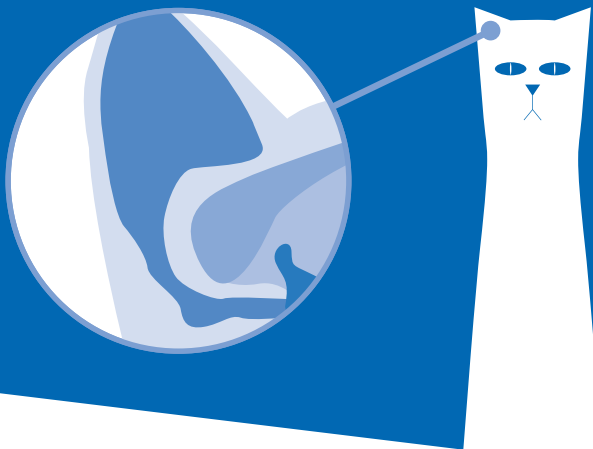


Deaf cats



CATS PROTECTION
VETERINARY GUIDES



Deaf cats compensate for their lack of hearing by using their other senses more, so much so that it may be hard to tell whether or not they are deaf. There are varying degrees of deafness and different causes which may or may not be treatable.

Types of deafness

There are two main types of deafness:

Where the sound cannot pass into the ear, eg due to:

- tumours
- outer and middle ear infections
- wax build-up
- ear mites

This type of deafness (above) may be reversible by treating the root cause.

Where the nerves associated with the ear do not function properly, eg due to:

- genetic problems (eg in the case of some white cats)
- inner ear infections
- drug toxicity
- noise trauma
- age-related degeneration

All of these can produce permanent deafness.

How can I tell if my cat is deaf?

It can be difficult to determine if a cat is deaf, particularly if he has been deaf from birth and is very used to his condition, but signs may include:

- failure to respond when called or when loud appliances are switched on
- being easily startled
- very loud miaowing
- signs of dizziness or disorientation
- shaking the head or clawing at the ear
- pus, discharge or unpleasant odour coming from the ear

How do I help my deaf cat adapt?

Generally, a deaf cat doesn't need to be treated any differently than any other cat. If your cat is easily startled, try walking heavily to announce your presence. Some cats also learn to recognise hand or light signals. When doing this, you must be distinct and consistent so as not to confuse him.

Deaf cats cannot hear danger signals such as cars or other animals. Cats Protection recommends that they are kept indoors for their own safety, unless you have an escape-proof garden or outside run. If you decide to let your deaf cat out, make sure he wears a well-fitting safety collar that states his disability and your details in case he escapes.

If you decide to keep your cat indoors entirely, ensure you enrich his environment with toys, games, climbers and scratchers to alleviate boredom.

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**



Cats Protection, National Cat Centre,
Chelwood Gate, Nr Haywards Heath RH17 7TT

Helpline: 03000 12 12 12 Email: cp@cats.org.uk
Web: www.cats.org.uk VET04-2009 **CODE: 4076**

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)