**Your Cat's Stress Audit**

Stress weakens the immune system. This Stress Audit is meant to help you reflect on what might be stressing your cat. Feline herpesvirus (FHV) lies dormant in nearly every cat, resurfacing when the immune system weakens. This allows the virus to reactivate and attack the eye(s) and/or cause a cold (upper respiratory tract infection. The cornerstone of helping your cat get better is figuring out what might be stressing them, and then reducing or eliminating those stressors. This is your job, and not your veterinarian's job. Medications only go so far, plus the act of medicating is a stress to your cat so we must carefully choose from the variety of therapies available. Try to limit "active" therapies, where you are forcing treatments upon your cat. Your home is your cat's universe, and you are in charge of keeping that universe as stable as possible.

**Common Stressors**: Mark if Present

the cat is new to your home \_\_\_\_\_

the cat is new AND was in a shelter before adoption \_\_\_\_\_

moving \_\_\_\_\_

moving furniture around \_\_\_\_\_

holidays (especially Christmas) \_\_\_\_\_

boarding the cat \_\_\_\_\_

losing another pet in the household \_\_\_\_\_

adding a new pet to the household \_\_\_\_\_

puppy (first year of life) in household \_\_\_\_\_

fighting with other family cats \_\_\_\_\_

fighting with neighborhood cats \_\_\_\_\_

remodeling your home \_\_\_\_\_

you being gone for a while \_\_\_\_\_

company visiting the home for a lengthy period \_\_\_\_\_

changing type of cat litter \_\_\_\_\_

changing food \_\_\_\_\_

changing room(s) where cat lives in the home \_\_\_\_\_

frequent and/or chronic medications \_\_\_\_\_

illness of any kind, especially chronic \_\_\_\_\_

medical procedure/surgery \_\_\_\_\_

chronic pain \_\_\_\_\_

unusually loud noises (e.g. construction nearby) \_\_\_\_\_

insomnia \_\_\_\_\_

pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_

aging (your cat is geriatric) \_\_\_\_\_

YOU being stressed \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments:**

1. Cats with unusually sensitive temperaments are more easily stressed by everything.

2. Cats being treated with steroids (oral or injection) have suppressed immune systems and

this can cause reactivation of dormant FHV. Topical eye medication containing steroid can cause reactivation on the surface of the eye of dormant FHV.

3. Vaccinations work by challenging the immune system. Vaccination in and of itself does not trigger reactivation of dormant FHV.

4. Just as for people, cats can have more than one stressor at a time, with an additive effect.

5. Just because a cat does not look stressed does not mean that it is not stressed. People with chronic stress usually look just the same as everyone else, but are good at hiding their stress. Cats are the same way. It is easy to misjudge just how stressed your cat is.

6. If you lose a pet in your household that your cat did not get along with or did not interact much with, it is still a change in your cat's daily life to not have that pet present. And you are grieving the loss of that pet, so that means there are two stressors present for your cat.

7. Only you can determine how much each stressor affects your cat's well-being.

8. If you have significant stress in your life, don't underrate how stressed your cat may be by your stress. Your cat knows you very well and is stressed by your stress. To that end, we suggest that you visit this website:

**https://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory/**

This is a self-assessment stress inventory that may help you more clearly see how stressed you are. And if you can improve your stress, you also are helping your cat!