

HOUSE TRAINING ACCIDENTS COULD BE A SIGN OF ANOTHER MEDICAL CONDITION

Several medical conditions mimic the signs of feline cognitive dysfunction:

- ◆ Age-related kidney failure may cause cats to urinate more frequently, leading some fastidious cats to find places to eliminate other than a soiled litter box.
- ◆ Hearing problems or dizziness resulting from inner ear infections may make a cat appear disoriented.
- ◆ Blindness caused by cataracts or by hypertension leading to retinal detachment can create confusion, especially if the onset is sudden.
- ◆ Night-time vocalizing is relatively common in hyperthyroid cats.
- ◆ Arthritis or degenerative joint disease can cause reduced activity or reluctance to travel to or jump in the litter box.
- ◆ Pain from advancing periodontal disease may result in less interest in food.

According to the Cornell Feline Health Center, many of the signs of cognitive dysfunction may also be traced to a neurologic disorder in the prosencephalon (front part of the brain), which controls everything from vision and hearing to sleeping and eating. Tissue inflammation, tumors, trauma or metabolic diseases may all have an impact on prosencephalon function. An analysis of cerebrospinal fluid and/or an MRI can rule out other conditions that can mimic the symptoms of feline cognitive dysfunction.