



# Hypertension

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common problem in older cats. It is usually seen as a result of another underlying disease - particularly kidney disease and hyperthyroidism. Left untreated, it can cause damage to the eyes, brain, heart and kidneys. Treatment is usually fairly straightforward, although investigation and treatment of the underlying disease is also important.

## What are the symptoms?

### Eyes

The most common and obvious symptoms are damage to the eyes - causing blindness and internal bleeding.

### Brain

Damage to the brain can cause behavioural changes, and a wobbly gait. These are often put down to old age by owners.

### Heart

Damage to the heart can cause breathing difficulty due to congestive heart failure.

### Kidneys

Damage to the kidneys may cause weight loss, reduced appetite and increased thirst.



**Bleeding into the eye caused by hypertension**



**Monitoring blood pressure**

## How is it diagnosed?

Blood pressure is measured using a cuff around the leg or tail, in a similar way to blood pressure measurement in people. Because of the association with other diseases, blood tests and urine test are usually used to look for an underlying cause for hypertension.

## Treatment

Hypertension is treated with tablets given daily. Regular monitoring of blood pressure, together with any underlying disease, is important, and doses of medication may need to be adjusted based on the response to treatment.