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## **Cats and Hairballs**

### **General Information**

Cats spend a significant part of their lives cleaning and grooming - as much as 1 /3 of their waking hours. While this natural instinct makes them ideal house pets, it can lead to some uncomfortable side effects.

The problem begins during the cleaning process when cats often swallow their own hair. The cat's tongue is the culprit. It has tiny, barb-like projections on its surface, which pull loose hair from the coat. Because of the inward angle of these barbs, the hair remains lodged on the tongue's surface until the cat swallows it. Since hair is largely insoluble protein, it cannot be dissolved by the cat's digestive system. As this undigested hair begins to knot in the stomach and accumulate in the gastrointestinal tract it can interfere with normal digestion and elimination.

Symptoms of "hairballs" include constipation, lethargy, dry cough, and even vomiting. Hairballs can also cause depression and loss of appetite.

The most dramatic and obvious symptom is the regurgitated hairball, which is often tubular in shape. Besides being an inconvenience to clean up, it is a definite sign that your cat has a problem and needs help. Although rarely fatal, hairballs are very uncomfortable for your cat and can lead to serious complications.

### **What can be done?**

Daily brushing of your cat's coat to remove loose hair is good preventive medicine. "Longhaired" breeds like Himalayans and Persians may need extra attention. During the spring when most cats shed, daily brushing is especially important.

Besides brushing the coat, several medications are available to eliminate hairballs and help prevent their recurrence. Veterinarians have recommended Laxatone for decades. Laxatone aids in the elimination of accumulated hair and other materials without discomfort. Laxatone is easy and convenient to administer. It contains a gentle, non-irritating, effective intestinal lubricant to aid in the elimination of swallowed hair and prevention of hairballs. Most cats love the taste of Laxatone and take it readily.

Your cat relies on you for help in relieving this problem. Frequent brushing, regular use of a hairball remedy and following the advice of Dr. Johnson is all it takes.