

Cat owners should be aware of feline disease

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May 18's front-page article featuring Dr. Fobian did a good job highlighting some of the more common concerns regarding pet health. Those with cats should also be aware of a somewhat rare, but very real threat that is new to our area.

The name of this disease is cytauxzoonosis and has been brought to us by bobcats, 60 percent of which are carriers. As strange as it seems, ticks from these bobcats occasionally fall off and could conceivably end up latching onto a domestic cat. A single tick bite could be enough to infect the cat. The grim facts are that there are no vaccine and no successful treatment — just some experimental medicines.

Nearly 100 percent of infected cats die within a few days of their first symptoms. I know these facts because my own cat has the horrible distinction of being one of the first to contract and perish from this in our region, even though I was doing everything I knew of at the time to protect him from serious health risks.

Some of his toys still lie motionless on the floor, where he was batting them around just days ago, when he was a big, strong, playful, seemingly healthy cat.

I urge all those with cats to contact their vet's office about the best way to minimize the risk to their pets and also caution them against using any products not specifically intended for use on cats as they would be toxic.

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