

Life expectancy study reveals longest and shortest-lived cats

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A team of pathobiologists at The Royal Veterinary College, in the U.K., working with a colleague from National Chung Hsing University, in Taiwan, has created a life expectancy chart for approximately 8,000

domestic cat breeds.

In their [paper](#) published in *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, the group outlines their findings and offer some insight into why some cats live longer or shorter lives than others.

Prior research and anecdotal evidence suggest that some cat breeds have longer or shorter lifespans than average. The research team sought to more specifically categorize [life expectancy](#) in [domestic cats](#) by creating a chart showing the average lifespan of thousands of house cats.

The work by the team involved pulling death certificate data from the VetCompass Program, for the years 2019 to 2021. In so doing, they were able to learn the details of 7,936 cat deaths in the U.K., which they then used to create a chart listing cat breeds in order of life expectancy from longest-lived to shortest.

In looking at their data, they found that life expectancy for the cats overall was 11.74 years and that males lived on average 16 months less than females. They also found that the Burmese breed was the longest-lived, with a life expectancy of 14.42 years, and that the Sphynx, was the shortest, with a life expectancy of just 6.68 years.

They also found that, like humans, lifestyle had an impact on longevity—overweight cats, for example, tended to not live as long. They also found that the types of breeding that have been done to generate new or different types of breeds have had an impact on life expectancy as well.

Such breeding, they note has been linked to common birth defects in cats, such as heart defects, eye disease and weaker than normal muscles. The Sphynx [breed](#), they note, is a prime example of breeding that has led to a popular but unhealthy pet.

The hairless cats (bred to allow people with fur allergies to have a cat) have an increased risk of several different types of diseases, many of which can lead to an [early death](#).

More information: Kendy Tzu-yun Teng et al, Life tables of annual life expectancy and risk factors for mortality in cats in the UK, *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/1098612X241234556](#)

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