

Feline Cerebellar Hypoplasia

Cerebellar Hypoplasia (CH) is a non-progressive, non-contagious, neurological disorder found in cats, which can cause tremors, jerky movements, and uncoordinated movements. CH is considered to be the human equivalent of ataxic cerebral palsy. Typically a cat with CH may have trouble walking, and/or frequently fall down.

It is important to note, however, that CH diagnosed cats do not experience any pain due to the disorder, and they have very normal life expectancies. It is also important to note that this is a disorder that cats are born with, and therefore not a contagious disorder, and does not worsen with time.

CH occurs when the cerebellum, the part of the brain which controls fine motor skills and coordination, is not fully developed at birth. This can be due to a mother cat who contracts Feline Panleukopenia virus while pregnant, passing the virus onto her kitten(s), and in turn possibly causing some to be born with CH. It can also be due to trauma, such as malnutrition, taking place while the kitten is in the womb. However, kittens with CH are not infected with or carriers of Panleukopenia.

The only official way to diagnose CH is through an MRI or CT scan, however these are not always necessary, as many veterinarians are familiar with the symptoms and characteristics of the disorder. There is no treatment for CH in cats, and many owners will tell you that there doesn't have to be one. These cats will learn how to do things a little bit differently than "regular" cats, but they won't be stopped from living playful happy lives just like any other cat.

There is a very common misconception and lack of knowledge with CH in cats, and because of that, many of these cats are unnecessarily euthanized. With just a little bit of extra care and a closer watch, these wobbly cats are sweet, loving, great companions, just like any other cat.