

Upper Respiratory Tract Infection - Cats

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Overview

Feline upper respiratory infection refers to infections in the area of the nose, throat and sinus area, much like the common cold in humans. In cats, these infections are quite common and very contagious and commonly caused by one or multiple organisms. The two primary viruses involved are feline herpesvirus-1 and feline calicivirus and the bacterial organisms involved can be feline chlamydia and bordetella bronchiseptica. Some of the organisms can also cause ulcers in the mouth and eye infections.

Cats susceptible to upper respiratory infections generally develop signs about two to five days after exposure. Fever and sinus congestion may also occur. The disease typically resolves in 10-14 days, without complications. Very young kittens have a higher incidence of pneumonia and some do not survive the infection.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Feline upper respiratory infection is generally diagnosed by a thorough history and physical examination. Chest x-rays may be recommended to evaluate for pneumonia.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Since most infections are viral, there are no drugs available to kill the virus so treatment is aimed at treating the symptoms. Basic treatment usually includes proper diet and sufficient fluids, antibiotics, nebulization (a process to humidify the air and keep the nasal passages moist), and eye medications if eye infections or ulcers are present. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Sneezing
- Watery eyes
- Nasal discharge
- Poor appetite
- Drooling
- Breathing problems
- Open mouth breathing
- Coughing

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*