cat adoption team

Common Feline Health Concerns

Diarrhea

Causes

Diarrhea can be caused by stress, viral or bacterial infections, parasites, sudden changes in diet, food sensitivities, and endocrine or metabolic diseases.

What to Do at Home

If your cat's food was recently changed, please resume feeding their regular food. Avoid feeding treats, table scraps, and too many food options as these can all contribute to gastrointestinal (GI) upset.

Probiotics (like Purina Fortiflora) or prebiotics and fiber supplements (like Diagel or powdered pumpkin) are available online or at most pet supply stores and can be administered orally or mixed into wet food to help resolve diarrhea caused by stress or diet changes. Follow the labeled instructions. *Do not* give human medications such as Pepto Bismol or Imodium—these could be very harmful to your cat.

When to Seek Veterinary Care

If the diarrhea persists for more than 3 days and is not responsive to probiotics, pumpkin, or a diet change, please contact your vet. They will want to check a fecal sample for parasites and abnormal bacteria. Please seek care sooner if your cat is not eating or drinking well, has diarrhea the consistency of water, appears lethargic, or has lost weight.

When bringing in a fecal sample to the vet, the fresher the better. Try to get a sample that is less than 12 hours old. Keep the sample in the refrigerator until the time of drop off, and try to collect as much fecal volume with as little litter as possible.

cat adoption team

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI or "kitty cold")

Causes

Feline upper respiratory infections (URIs) are typically caused by a virus. Infection can be from new virus exposure to a naive immune system; but more commonly, it is from re-activation of an already-acquired virus that had been dormant. Suppression of the immune system from stress or other illness is how the virus re-activates. Once there is a viral infection to weaken mucosal barriers, it is easy for secondary bacterial pathogens to cause infection too.

Viral-only infections typically have clear nasal and/or ocular discharge. Some cats can get over these infections without much medical intervention- just like a person getting over a head cold. Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics, but supportive care may be needed if the cat has a fever or stops eating.

Once there is a bacterial infection, nasal and ocular secretions tend to thicken and change colors (green, yellow). At this point, antibiotics are typically recommended.

What to Do at Home

Make sure your cat has a safe, comfy place to recover with plenty of bedding and places to hide. Offer your cat gently warmed (not too hot) canned food multiple times throughout the day. Warming the food makes it more aromatic which helps encourage cats to eat. Keep track of how much food and water your cat is eating and drinking. By monitoring their intake, you will be able to know if they have a sudden decrease in appetite.

Keep them away from other animals - both to decrease stress and prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands and change clothing after handling your sick kitty if you are going to be interacting with other cats.

If your cat has been prescribed antibiotics or other medications, give them as directed.

When to Seek Veterinary Care

Please seek care if:

- Your cat stops eating for more than 24 hours, or your cat is only eating half their normal intake for 2-3 day
- Your cat has green or yellow ocular or nasal discharge, as these often need antibiotics
- Your is lethargic

If you are concerned about any of their symptoms, please seek veterinary care.

cat adoption team

Spay/Neuter or other Surgical Incision Issues

Causes

Issues with surgical incisions can occur as a result of infection, the cat licking or traumatizing the area, suture dehiscence, too much physical activity following surgery, or a reaction to the suture material or tattoo ink.

What to Do at Home

Veterinary exams are the best for diagnosing the cause of a surgical incision issue. If you can't get an in-person appointment within 24 hours, try getting some good photos to email to your veterinarian for advice.

In the meantime, keep the area clean and dry and make sure your cat is wearing an e-collar so they don't traumatize the incision. If there is swelling, you can try applying a moist, warm (not hot) compress for 5 minutes twice a day. Do not attempt this if your cat does not tolerate it or appears painful.

When to Seek Veterinary Care

If the incision has opened, has drainage, is becoming more swollen, appears red, or is causing pain. If you are concerned about any of their symptoms, please seek veterinary care.