

Cat 101

Facts About Feline Upper Respiratory Infections

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is caused by a virus and is similar to the common cold in humans. For cats and kittens, stress can prolong illness so it's helpful to provide care and rest in a quiet, calm place like a loving home. Most kitties feel better in 7-14 days.

Please keep in mind that you should ALWAYS wash your hands after handling sick cats.

Look for the signs of URI

- Sneezing, runny nose, and/or nasal congestion
- Red, swollen, or runny eyes and squinting
- Coughing or hard swallowing
- Sores (ulcers) on the tongue, lips, nose, or roof of mouth
- Fever, lack of appetite, hiding, and/or decreased energy

When to call a veterinarian

We recommend that all pet owners establish a relationship with a full-service veterinarian. Newly adopted pets are provided with a free first exam with a local veterinarian. Information is included in your adoption packet.

It's important to contact your veterinarian if your cat has any of the following signs:

- Depressed or unresponsive; not eating for more than 24 hours
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose
- Difficulty breathing, especially panting or breathing through an open mouth
- Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home care

What's the URI treatment plan?

Just like with humans, viral infections are not cured by antibiotics, even though they might be used for bacterial infections. If your cat has a URI, he should be separated from other cats in the household and placed in a quiet space where he can recover. Once your cat heals, he can gradually be introduced to people and other animals in the household.

Tips to help heal from URI

- A low-stress room is necessary for your cat to rest, acclimate, and recover
- Because he may not be able to smell food while he is sick, your cat's eating habits may change. Offer warmed canned food to help boost his appetite.
- Gently clean discharge from nose and eyes with a warm, moist cloth at least once daily
- Give any prescribed medications as directed by your veterinarian