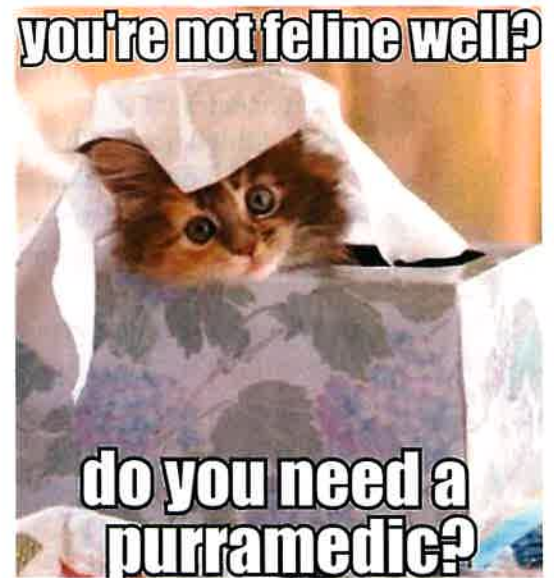


Feline Upper Respiratory Infections (URI)

HSNBA would never knowingly send home a cat who is sick, however, many illnesses can incubate for days or weeks and the symptoms may not show until the cat has settled into its new home. The most common cat illness we see is what is called a Feline Upper Respiratory Infection, or URI for short. URI is like the common cold in humans. It is especially common in cats that have been exposed to a lot of other cats, such as in an animal shelter. URI is rarely fatal and usually resolves in one to three weeks. Treatment generally consists of supportive care. In addition, antibiotics are sometimes given to treat possible bacterial infections. However, although secondary bacterial infections can make the problem worse, the underlying cause is often a viral infection. Viral infections are not cured by antibiotics – as with the common cold, there is no completely effective treatment besides time and allowing the cat's own immune system to do its job.



What are the signs of URI?

- Clear or colored nasal discharge (snot)
- Sneezing
- Red inflamed conjunctiva (lining of the eyes)
- Fever, lethargy, loss of appetite

What can I do to make my new cat feel better?

What makes you feel better when you have a cold? A warm, quiet, comfy place to rest, chicken soup, orange juice and TLC! Your cat needs the same, with some slight modifications for felines!

- Make sure the cat is eating. When cats get stuffy noses, they cannot smell their food very well and may not want to eat. Offer canned food, canned chicken, tuna or salmon, or meat flavored baby food.
- If the cat is producing discharge from eyes or nose, gently clean the cat's nose and eyes with a soft cloth wet with warm water.
- If the cat is very congested, use a humidifier or put the cat in the bathroom and run hot water in the shower for a few minutes a couple of times a day. For a more concentrated steam treatment, put the cat in a carrier next to the sink, cover the carrier and the faucet with a thick towel and run the water on hot for 5-10 minutes. The steam should remain trapped under the towel.
- "Little Noses" is an over the counter decongestant designed for infants that can help kittens too! A drop in each nostril 2 times a day can help.

When do I need to seek out veterinary attention?

- Not eating for more than 24 hours.
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose or eyes
- Difficulty breathing, especially panting, or breathing through an open mouth
- Depressed or unresponsive cat: a slight decrease in activity is expected, but if the cat is much less active than you would expect, make a vet appointment
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home supportive care

What can I expect the veterinarian to do?

- If an infection is indicated by fever or green or yellow discharge or other symptoms, the vet may prescribe an antibiotic. Give the antibiotic as directed, until it is gone. Do not stop giving the antibiotic if the cat seems to be getting better, continue as prescribed.
- If eyes are affected by the URI, eye ointment may be prescribed, administer as directed.
- If the cat is dehydrated, they may give IV fluids
- ***How do I know my cat is improving?***
- Increased appetite and activity
- Sneezing almost never
- No ocular or nasal discharge

