



INFORMATION FOR NEW CAT ADOPTERS-FELINE URI

What you should know about Feline Upper Respiratory Infection

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is similar to a common cold in humans and it's especially common in cats that have been exposed to a lot of other cats, such as at an animal shelter. *URI is very rarely fatal*, and usually clears up within one to three weeks.

Antibiotics are sometimes given to treat possible bacterial infections. However, the underlying cause is often a viral infection. *Viral infections are not cured by antibiotics as with the common cold* and there is no completely effective treatment besides time and allowing the cat's own immune system to do its job. In rare cases, URI can cause serious disease such as pneumonia. Also, sick cats may not eat or drink adequate amounts and may become severely dehydrated. In such cases, hospitalization and fluid supplementation may be needed.

How contagious is URI and can your own pets contract it?

URI is contagious to other cats. Most cats are vaccinated against it (it's part of the standard yearly vaccinations recommended by most vets). However, the vaccine is not 100% protective, so it's a good idea to isolate cats showing signs of the disease, and wash hands after handling sick cats. (In general we recommend isolating all new arrivals in your household for 8-10 days after adoption so they can settle in and make sure they are not coming down with anything.) URI isn't contagious to people or other animals.



What are the signs of URI?

- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Red and or runny eyes
- Sores on the tongue, lips, nose or roof of mouth
- Fever, lack of appetite and/or decreased energy

When should you contact a veterinarian?

Every animal adopted from a shelter should be taken for an examination by your regular vet within 2 days of adoption.

With rest and good care, many cats will recover from mild URI in one or two weeks. Contact your veterinarian if your cat has any of the following signs:

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



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