

## Shelter Cats Are Prone to Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs)

Feline Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs), which are a form of the common cold, are more prevalent among cats that are in shelter situations where they are crowded together and become stressed. However, any cat can get a URI. Most vulnerable are kittens due to their underdeveloped immune systems.

The treatment for URIs ranges from just rest to extra fluids and rest, to one or more medications. URIs cause nasal congestion that affects a cat's ability to smell food resulting in a decreased appetite which can lead to dehydration. Do not try to treat your cat with home remedies and NEVER give human medications which can be fatal to cats.



### Look for these symptoms of feline URIs:

#### Coughing and sneezing

Sneezing is usually the first symptom of a URI. Sometimes cat sneezes can be very pronounced; other times your cat may sneeze more quietly. In either case, sneezing is usually a sign of the beginning of a URI. Your cat may also begin to cough.

#### Discharge from eyes or nose

Your cat's eyes may look teary, runny or even goopy, with a thick discharge. The eyelid may be partially or completely closed. If this symptom is present, see your veterinarian immediately to avoid permanent damage to your cat's corneas. You may also notice thick, greenish or yellowish discharge coming from your cat's nose, along with some sniffles.

#### Loss of Appetite

As in humans, loss of appetite is a common symptom of a URI since your cat is not feeling well. Adequate food is essential to enable your cat to fight off the infection and to prevent dehydration.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If your kitty is not eating normally, try canned cat food that has a strong smell such as tuna, salmon or any other stinky foods. Warm food slightly in the microwave to enhance the odor. Food with a strong odor will penetrate your cat's congested nose and get them interested in the food. To temporarily help your cat breathe, place your cat in a steamy bathroom where the vapors will help clear the nasal passages. If your cat is still not eating, your veterinarian will show you how to syringe feed your cat or will provide medication to stimulate his/her appetite.

#### Lethargy

Your cat may seem uncharacteristically tired or unwilling to move or play. Lethargy is a sign of a URI. Your cat may lack his/her usual energy and spend unusual amounts of time sleeping.

#### Care for cats & kittens from Oakland Pet Adoption Center

If you recently adopted a cat or kitten from Oakland Pet Adoption Center in Auburn Hills, call The Cat Practice if you have questions about URIs or other cat care questions.



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Do you have questions about URIs?  
Feel free to contact us at The Cat Practice!