

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection

Is your cat sneezing? Does it have ocular or nasal discharge? If so, your feline friend may be suffering from an upper respiratory infection. Feline upper respiratory infections are mostly caused by viruses. The majority of infections are caused by a herpes virus. Not to worry, this is different than the herpes that affects humans. In fact, herpes are very species specific viruses.

Most cats are infected as kittens from their mothers or even in shelter situations. The infection is highly contagious between cats. Unfortunately, like herpes in people, once a cat is infected with the herpes virus, it is usually infected for life. This means that an upper respiratory infection can remain dormant in the body for weeks, months, or even years, then, in periods of stress, can reappear. Some cats can even become persistently infected and have chronic upper respiratory infections.

There is no cure for herpes. Lysine can sometimes help the cat's immune system fight the virus. There are other treatments that can be recommended by your doctors as well. While herpes is rarely fatal, it can cause lifelong problems if not addressed. If you suspect that your cat has an upper respiratory infection, please contact your veterinarian.

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