

Information for Adopters: Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Some of this information provided courtesy of Dr. Stacy Cannon, Nashville Metro Animal Care and Control & ASPCA.

Facts About Feline URI

Feline URI is similar to the common cold in humans. It's caused by a virus, and stressful environments and situations factor in as well. With supportive care and rest in a quiet, calm place like a loving home, most cases resolve in 7-14 days.



Signs of URI

- Sneezing
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Red, swollen or runny eyes or 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

URI Treatment Plan

Just like with humans, viral infections aren't cured by antibiotics, even though they might be used for bacterial infections. A cat with URI should be separated from other cats in the household and put in a quiet space where he can recover in a low-stress setting. The cat can gradually be introduced to people and other animals in the household once he's recovered.

In-Home Care for URI

- A low-stress room is necessary for the cat to rest, acclimate and recover
- Make sure the cat is eating (when cats get stuffy noses, they can't smell their food well) so offer canned food, warmed gently in the microwave to stimulate appetite
- Gently clean discharge from nose and eyes with a warm moist cloth at least once daily
- Administer any prescribed medications as directed by your veterinarian

NOTE: ALWAYS wash hands after handling sick cats.

When to Call a Veterinarian

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
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home care