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CAT HAVEN
every cat matters

WA's Premier Cat Welfare Charity



CAT HAVEN INFORMATION SHEET - "CAT FLU"

What is Cat Flu?

Cat Flu is a disease of cats usually caused by a virus and is very similar to the human cold and flu. It is usually not life threatening unless the cat has a severe problem with its immune system. Signs of Cat Flu may last from a couple of days to several weeks, and usually include one or a combination of the following:

- sneezing
- clear or coloured discharge from the nose and/or eyes
- ulcers on the nose, lips, tongue or gums
- fever, lethargy, loss of appetite (these may be signs of other disease also)

A cat showing the above signs can spread disease to other cats. However once a cat has recovered it may continue to spread disease. Some cats harbor the virus in their body and from time to time can become unwell as a result.

Can Cat Flu be spread to people?

Generally the disease cannot be spread to people, however in some rare cases where the cause is Kennel Cough (*Bordetella bronchiseptica*), it may be spread to individuals that do not have a fully functional immune system.

How common in Cat Flu?

Unfortunately Cat Flu is a common disease of cats worldwide. As much as Cat Haven does to ensure the cats are happy and healthy, they are usually from unknown backgrounds being housed in a shelter situation, both of which may be associated with stress and can result in a cat developing Cat Flu.

How is Cat Flu prevented?

Vaccination is used in the prevention of Cat Flu and is effective. It is important to realize that vaccination of your cat will not stop it from getting the virus however it will reduce the severity of the disease.

How is Cat Flu treated?

If your cat is seen by a veterinarian, medication such as antibiotics and pain relief may be prescribed. Sometimes when the cat has not been eating or drinking well, fluids may be administered by injection.

Generally the most important care of your sick cat needs to be provided by you, the owner. This often involves a combination of the following:

- Encouraging your cat to eat and drink is very important if it has lost its appetite as food and water provides essential nutrition to aid recovery. A cat's nose will often become blocked when they have Cat Flu resulting in inappetence. Offering strong smelling food (such as fish) or warming the food can often encourage eating. Hills Prescription A/D food is often palatable to sick cats and is specially formulated for animals that are sick and recovering from disease. You may need to offer several different types of food to your sick cat to find something it will happily eat. Some cats also respond to being patted while near their food to encourage eating.
- Syringe feeding may be required if the above measures do not result in your cat eating. Veterinary staff will instruct you on how to syringe feed.
- Placing the cat in a steamy environment will help clear congested nasal passages. You can place the cat in the bathroom with the door shut while you are having a warm shower, or use a vaporizer if you have access to this.
- Ensure that fresh clean water and a clean litter tray is within easy access.

You should contact Cat Haven on 9442 3600 if you are concerned that your cat is showing signs of Cat Flu. You may be advised to bring your cat in for a consultation with a veterinarian, or you may be given some advice over the phone.