



勝利動物醫院  
Victory Animal Hospital

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# Feline Calicivirus Infection

## What is feline calicivirus?

Feline calicivirus (FCV) is a virus that is an important cause of upper respiratory infections and oral disease in cats. This virus infects cats throughout the world.

Although several different viruses and bacteria can cause respiratory disease in cats, calicivirus is one of the more common infectious agents isolated in cats with a respiratory infection.

## What are the symptoms of a calicivirus infection?

The typical symptoms of an upper respiratory infection involve the nose and throat, causing symptoms such as sneezing, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis (inflammation of the membranes lining the eyelids), and discharges from the nose or eyes. The discharges may be clear or may become purulent (containing pus).

In addition to these typical symptoms, cats with a calicivirus infection often develop ulcers on the tongue, hard palate, gums, lips or nose; cats with ulcers in the mouth will usually salivate or drool excessively. Symptoms that are not specific for an upper respiratory infection include anorexia, lethargy, fever, enlarged lymph nodes and blepharospasm (squinting).



## How does a cat get a calicivirus infection?

Calicivirus is highly contagious, and infected cats can shed viral particles in saliva or secretions from the nose or eyes. If an infected cat sneezes, airborne viral particles can be sprayed several meters through the air.

Susceptible cats can get an infection by direct contact with another infected cat or by environmental exposure to objects that have been contaminated with infectious secretions.

Although all susceptible cats may develop a calicivirus infection, symptoms tend to be more severe in young kittens.

## How is a calicivirus infection treated?

Most cats with an uncomplicated calicivirus infection can be treated symptomatically at home. Your veterinarian may prescribe an eye medication to be applied topically if your cat has a purulent eye discharge. Although viral infections do not respond to antibacterial drugs, broad spectrum antibacterial



drugs may be prescribed in an effort to prevent secondary bacterial infections from complicating the disease, particularly in kittens. Anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed to relieve symptoms of lameness. Cats that have persistent ulcers may benefit from treatments that modulate or support the immune system.

If a cat is dehydrated, depressed, or has a severe case of illness, your veterinarian will recommend hospitalization for more intensive treatment, including intravenous fluids and other supportive treatments.

## How can calicivirus infections be prevented?

"The standard 'core' vaccines that are given to cats include immunization against calicivirus..."

The standard 'core' vaccines that are given to cats include immunization against calicivirus and will help reduce the severity of disease and shorten the length of the illness if your cat is exposed. Kittens require several boosters of this vaccine between the ages of 6 and 16 weeks, and at least one other booster a year later. After this initial series, the vaccine will also need to be boosted on a regular basis every 1–3 years. It is particularly important to give your cat a booster vaccine before he or she is placed in a high risk situation such as boarding, grooming, going to a cat show, or otherwise being exposed to cats that could be potential carriers of calicivirus. Your veterinarian will advise you on the recommended booster schedule for your individual cat.



## Are other cats in the household at risk of infection?

A cat that has an acute calicivirus infection will be infective to other cats during the incubation period and for at least 3 weeks after developing symptoms. A cat that is a carrier of calicivirus may always be infective to other cats. Cats that are unvaccinated, are young, or have chronic underlying problems are more susceptible, and may develop a serious illness.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Cheryl Yuill, DVM, MSc, CVH ©*

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