

# **FELINE UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION**

There are many causes of respiratory infections in the cat, both viral and bacterial.

**Respiratory infections are usually viral and are often HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS to other cats.** They may cause serious disease that can, sometimes, even result in death of the cat. Feline respiratory infections are thought to be spread primarily by carriers, which show **NO** outward signs of disease. These are often animals that have recently had the disease and recovered.

**Direct contact or indirect contact, such as hands, clothing, food bowls, etc may spread these diseases.** Clinical signs are usually seen 3-7 days after exposure.

**The most common clinical signs include fever, sneezing, watery eyes, nasal discharge, drooling, mouth ulcers, and loss of appetite, which is the result of the loss of smelling reflexes. Death is usually due to airway obstruction, dehydration, or malnutrition.**

After recovery, the cat continues to shed the virus for several months, possibly infecting other cats.

**Recovered cats may soon be susceptible to re-infection unless appropriately vaccinated.**

Therefore **ALL** cats should be vaccinated as soon as possible after recovery. Primary vaccination is done when kittens are 8 - 12 weeks old, and then boosters are given once each year in a combination vaccine covering many of the feline respiratory viruses.