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Feline Stomatitis

WHAT IS IT?

Stomatitis means inflammation of the mouth and gums. It can occur only around the teeth, only at the back of the mouth (called Fautitis), or it can involve the entire mouth. Some cats may not show any clinical signs of the disease. Other cats present with clinical signs such as bad breath, excessive salivation and drooling, difficulty swallowing, inappetance and weight loss. The inflammation is not only painful but also destroys the tooth root and causes dental problems. The cause of stomatitis is unknown, but may stem from a hypersensitivity reaction to bacteria at the gumline. It has also been theorized that these cats have an autoimmune condition where they destroy their own teeth. It is important to understand that this is a lifelong disease that can be frustrating to control.

TREATMENT

Treatment is aimed at controlling the symptoms and pain caused by the inflammation. Various approaches have been used in cats with stomatitis. The first part of treatment consists of intermittent antibiotic therapy as well as steroids. These can be given as needed, whenever the inflammation flares up. The second, and equally important part of therapy involves regular dental care. The teeth should be brushed daily with both animal approved toothpaste and an oral hygiene gel to decrease the bacterial load in the mouth. Unfortunately, the prognosis for cats with stomatitis is poor due to recurrence of disease. After all else has been attempted, many of these cats will need to have multiple dental extractions to control the disease.

HOME CARE

The most important aspect of home care is taking good care of your cat's teeth. Brush them daily as instructed. Most cats will require once to twice yearly dental cleanings under general anesthesia. Feed your cat a good quality DRY diet. Canned food contributes to dental tartar buildup. There is a prescription diet specific for dental health called Hill's t/d. The kibbles are specially designed to help scrape tartar and plaque off the teeth as they eat. Observe your cat's gums and teeth regularly for signs of increased redness and inflammation. Call your veterinarian when this happens.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS