

# All About Pets

*The national pet care information service*



## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SICK CAT



THE BLUE CROSS

*Britain's pet charity*

*Poorly cats should be kept indoors with a litter tray – if they are allowed to roam free they may not come back.  
Never give your cat your own medications because many are poisonous to cats.*





## Vomiting and diarrhoea

In very young or old animals the risk of dehydration is greater and tummy upsets can be very dangerous. If in any doubt, consult a vet as soon as possible. Any pet that has been vomiting for more than 24 hours should see a vet.

If your pet is vomiting, don't feed until at least 12 hours after vomiting has stopped. Then offer a teaspoonful of boiled skinned chicken or white fish, such as cod or coley. If this is kept down, give a little more after two hours. Keep your cat on this diet for a couple of days, then mix with normal food.

Pets with diarrhoea should be fed in the same way. Consult the vet if diarrhoea persists more than two to three days, or if your pet seems dull and does not want to eat.

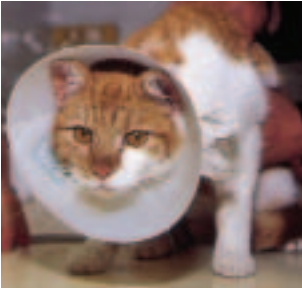
## Cat flu

This is a viral disease like a bad cold. It is not usually dangerous except in kittens, but you should still take your pet to the vet.

Cats like to smell their food and hate breathing through their mouths, so a bunged up nose can put them off eating. Also the virus can cause ulcers of the mouth and throat which make swallowing difficult. Ulcers can occur on the eyes as well, so if the eye is very swollen or closed up see a vet.

Wipe discharge from the nose and eyes with warm water. Many decongestants are toxic to cats, but Olbas oil is safe, either in a vaporiser or as a couple of drops on bedding – avoid direct contact with the skin.

## Skin problems



Bathe sore or itchy patches in cool salt water or apply an ice pack. Prevent licking with an Elizabethan collar – continual licking does not heal but increases soreness. Put socks on the hind feet and secure with tape to prevent scratching. Consider flea treatment – the most effective products are available from the vet.

Bite wounds from fighting may turn septic and discharge unpleasant smelling pus. They are not usually life threatening but do need antibiotic treatment.





## **Tempting a sick cat to eat**

Emotional upset can put a cat off its food but it can also be a sign of illness. If it lasts more than 24 hours see a vet. Invalids often don't feel like eating – for example, cats with kidney disease.

Warm food to release aroma and try strong smelling items like pilchards, in small quantities so that they don't cause digestive upsets. Many cats like chicken with Marmite or gravy, tinned tuna or invalid diets from the vet. Liquidise food if there is difficulty in swallowing. Offer bits of food by hand or dab a tiny bit onto the lips. Stroking or grooming a cat may encourage eating.

## **General nursing**

Provide a warm thick bed in a quiet place. You can buy heater pads, or use a well wrapped hot water bottle. Check the patient regularly through the day and if they are not able to move, turn them every two to four hours. Ensure the patient is not soiled with urine or faeces – wash with a baby shampoo if necessary and dry, being careful not to burn your cat if you use a hair dryer.

Check that you have enough medication to see you through the weekend and follow the vet's instructions carefully. Phone the vet immediately if your pet's condition deteriorates.

## Further information

For further information and advice on caring for your pet or horse visit [www.allaboutpets.org.uk](http://www.allaboutpets.org.uk), the national pet care information service. Alternatively, you can write to us at the address below to request a list of available leaflets.

All About Pets is provided by The Blue Cross, Britain's pet charity. We rely entirely on your support to enable us to continue our vital work. Any contribution would be most welcome. Thank you.



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