

About Upper Respiratory Infections in Cats and Kittens

Your new pet may have been exposed to a feline upper respiratory virus (URI), and may not begin to show symptoms for up to 2 weeks. The disease is similar to the human cold, in that the airborne virus mutates too rapidly to allow for effective vaccine prevention, and it is impossible to eliminate it from the shelter environment.

We treat cats and kittens that come down with URI while here with antibiotics and supportive care, and if we have observed sneezing in your pet, you will be sent home with medications. These don't CURE the virus, but work to prevent bacterial secondary infections, which can be serious, especially in young kittens.

Monitor your new pet carefully for the first 2 weeks. Be sure she's eating and drinking readily, and is active and playful.

If you notice any sneezing and/or discharge from nose or eyes, squinting or eye redness, loss of appetite, or she is being unusually quiet, then she may have URI.

Although the virus often runs its course without permanent damage in 10 - 14 days, there is a chance she could develop a serious secondary infection. Young kittens especially, with the stress of recent surgery and a move to a new environment, can get very sick, very fast! Do not ignore these symptoms. If you alert your vet and get the animal on medication and supportive care, she will be fine. But if you wait, you may jeopardize your pet's health.

URI is contagious to other cats, and this is another good reason to isolate the new pet at first, especially if you have other cats.

The Longmont Humane Society does all it can to safeguard the health of animals in our care, but we cannot assume responsibility once a pet leaves our facility. We do not provide medical services for owned animals, as all our resources are devoted to the homeless ones in the shelter. If you have further questions about URI, please call your veterinarian.

Your adoption also included a free gift of pet medical insurance. You should have received an email with a link to activate that insurance. If you have not received it, please contact us so we can help! Once activated, this medical insurance will fully cover many medical conditions such as URI.