

Cat Bite Abscess



An abscess is a collection of pus. In cats, abscesses are common after a cat fight. Cats are territorial animals, and will fight with other cats to defend their territory. If your cat gets bitten during a fight, bacteria from the other cat's teeth infect the wound and cause an abscess.

Bites are most common around the face and shoulders or around the rump and tail.

If you know your cat has been in a fight, have them checked out by a veterinarian. If your cat starts taking antibiotics within 24 hours after the fight, you may be able to keep an abscess from forming.

Symptoms

Abscesses usually appear two to seven days after your cat gets bitten. Usually, your cat will act unwell and may be listless and not eating well. He or she may be cranky, especially if touched where the injuries are. A fever may also be present.

If you gently probe where the cat is tender (put rubber gloves on for this—you could get a nasty surprise), you may feel a soft, warm lump. If the abscess has burst, you will find an open wound that is draining pus. Some of the skin around the abscess may have died from the pressure created by the pocket of pus.

Treatment

Abscesses are treated with surgery to flush out the pus and cut away any dead skin. Small latex drains may be inserted to drain the pus out so that the wound can heal.

Your cat will also need to take antibiotics to fight the infection that is causing the abscess.

Post-operative Care

You will need to continue to care for your cat after you take them home. You will need to:

- Clean the drains twice a day.
- Remove any scab that forms twice a day. This is extremely important so that the wound stays open and the pus can drain out. If necessary, you can soak the area in warm salty water.
- Your cat may need to wear an Elizabethan collar to keep them from chewing the drains out. Keep them indoors so that you can make sure they don't get the collar off or get in another fight.

- Make sure your cat takes all the antibiotics. There is an injection available that lasts two weeks.
- Revisit after 3-5 days to remove the drain and examine the wound.

Call us if you think the wound is not healing correctly, or if you have any other concerns.

Preventing Future Abscesses

Most abscesses are caused by cat fights, so the best way to prevent them is to keep your cat from fighting. You can do this by:

Keeping your cat indoors as much as possible, especially at night. More cat fights happen at night.

Get your cat neutered. Male cats fight more than females, and they fight over territory and females. Neutered males don't get in as many fights.

You can use mosquito repellants outside your house, such as mozzie-zappers. BUT....please DO NOT apply human mosquito repellents to cats, as they groom the product off themselves and they are highly sensitive to the chemicals.

FIV (Feline AIDS) Infection

Cats spread FIV through bites and scratches. Any time he has a cat fight wound, your cat may be exposed to Cat Aids. We recommend a blood test three months after the injury to see your cat has contracted FIV.

We strongly recommend vaccination against cat aids (FIV) for all cats that go outside. Please contact us for more information or to arrange a vaccination.

This is by no means a comprehensive information sheet, so please don't hesitate to contact us for more information.