



BRIARPOINTE VETERINARY CLINIC

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MANAGING THE SICK CAT

When your cat is being treated for an illness, it is very important that you follow our medical advice and instructions precisely. Bring your cat for re-examination if and when requested. If your cat's condition worsens unexpectedly, contact your veterinarian for advice.

A suitable place for your cat

Your cat should be in a location that is warm, dry, peaceful and quiet. There should be sufficient light for you to observe him or her. It may be necessary to provide an additional heat source such as a heating pad set on a low setting, a heat lamp or a hot water bottle. These should be used with care to avoid burns or overheating. A litter tray should be provided within easy walking distance of your cat's bed. It is often necessary to have a litter box with low sides to make access easier for an ailing cat. You may improvise a litter box by cutting down the sides of a cardboard box and lining it with a plastic bag to contain the litter.



Feeding your cat

Your sick cat needs to have both food and water. When cats are ill they will often stop eating and drinking. Thus, it is important to monitor your cat's intake so that you know when intervention is necessary.

Fresh water should be available at all times. Healthy cats often drink very little because the food they eat contains a high proportion of water. If your cat stops eating, he or she will need to have fluids. Fluids can be administered by

mouth by using a syringe. We will give you specific instructions on how much and how often to administer fluids.

Encourage your cat to eat small, frequent meals of a palatable, high energy, highly digestible food. Warming food to body heat often makes it more appealing. Some cats can be encouraged by hand feeding. We will advise you if there are any foods that you should not offer. If your cat cannot be tempted to eat voluntarily, we may suggest giving liquid food via a syringe. An alternative is to hospitalize the cat and feed it via a feeding tube.

Grooming and cleaning your cat

Many sick cats will stop grooming themselves. It is important that you help your cat by brushing or combing at least twice daily. Any discharges from the eyes, nose or mouth should be gently wiped away frequently using warm, wet cotton balls.

Giving medicines

Give your cat any prescribed medication at the dose and frequency prescribed and complete the full course of treatment. A separate advice leaflet is available about administering medications. If you are having difficulty giving tablets to your cat, call the office to see if a liquid formulation can be prescribed. Crushing tablets and mixing them with a little water so that they can be given by syringe may be another alternative.

Never give your cat any drugs other than those prescribed. **Never** give your cat aspirin unless we prescribe it; aspirin is easily overdosed in cats.

Disinfectants

Do not use any phenol-based disinfectants in the room that your cat is in as these are toxic to cats. A separate advice leaflet is available about disinfectants.

Monitoring your cat

Keep a close eye on your cat and note how much he is eating and drinking, whether he is urinating and defecating, and whether he develops any new abnormal signs such as vomiting, diarrhea, sneezing or coughing. Any changes should be reported to our office.



Administering a pill

Edited by John S. Parker, DVM

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