



New Berlin Animal Hospital
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MANAGING THE SICK CAT

Follow your veterinarian's advice and instructions very precisely. Take your cat for re-examination if requested to do so. 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. It may be necessary to provide an additional heat source such as a heat pad, 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.

Feeding your cat

Your sick cat needs to have both food and water. When cats are ill they will often stop eating and drinking and 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 do not drink very much because the food that they eat contains a high proportion of water. If your cat stops eating, he will need to have fluids. If it is not possible for your cat to be given fluids by mouth, your veterinarian will hospitalize your cat to give him the care he needs. Fluids can be administered by mouth by using a syringe. Your veterinarian 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. Choosing a favorite food will often meet these requirements. Warming food to body heat often makes it more appealing. Some cats can be encouraged by hand feeding. Your veterinarian will advise you if there are any foods that your cat should not be given. If your cat cannot be tempted to eat voluntarily, your veterinarian 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 once or twice a day using warm, wet cotton balls.



Giving medicines

Give your cat any prescribed medication at the dose and frequency stated by your veterinarian 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, contact your veterinarian 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 an alternative.

Never give your cat any drugs other than those prescribed for him by your veterinarian. Never give your cat aspirin unless specifically instructed by your veterinarian; he will tell you the appropriate dose which is much smaller than for humans and should be given much less often.



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, if he is urinating and defecating, if he develops any new abnormal signs such as vomiting, diarrhea, sneezing or coughing. You will then be able to report this to your veterinarian, which will help him to assess how your cat is progressing.