

## **Diarrhoea**

Diarrhoea in cats is not a disease in itself but rather a symptom that something is wrong with your cat or kitten's health. This could be a minor problem or could signify a more serious illness.

Like humans, many cats or kittens may suffer from an acute bout of diarrhoea. The meaning of 'acute' is that it comes on suddenly but will not last longer than a few days or maybe up to a week or so. If your cat or kitten is well and is eating, playing and generally looking well and has no other symptoms other than a loose bowel motion every so often then there is probably no cause for immediate alarm. The cause may well be a change in diet, the deworming needs to be redone again, or an increase in dairy products such as milk.

If the diarrhoea problem is chronic, (The definition of 'chronic' is an illness that persists for a long period of time) or your cat or kitten is showing signs of other symptoms such as not eating, vomiting, blood in the stool, losing weight, lethargy, then a visit to your vet must be scheduled.

### **What can I do at home for diarrhoea in kittens or cats before calling the vet?**

Withhold food (but not water) for 24 hours (12 hours for kittens) to give your cat's digestive system a rest (don't worry, your cat won't starve, he just will be grumpy). Then feed him a bland diet of 50% boiled rice and 50% chicken or 50/50 boiled rice for the next two to three days. You might want to add a spoonful of freshly cooked pumpkin puree. Do not feed any dairy products. If the diarrhoea doesn't resolve seek advice from your vet.

### **Watch out for dehydration**

A lot of water is lost from the cat or kitten's system when passing frequent watery motions so watch your cat for symptoms of dehydration. Check your cat's hydration level by gently pinching up a bit of skin on your cat's back. When released it should quickly return to its natural position. If the skin returns slowly then this is a sign of dehydration.

Encourage your cat to drink plenty of water. If dehydrated, RECOVERY solution (available at the vet) may be given. RECOVERY is an oral re-hydration therapy for cats and can be used to reverse the effects of dehydration and loss of electrolytes following diarrhoea.

Therefore, if diarrhoea persists or worsens you should seek immediately advice from your vet.