



## Feline Stomatitis

### **What is feline stomatitis?**

Stomatitis is the inflammation of the soft tissue within the oral cavity

### **Which animals are affected?**

Stomatitis can occur in cats of all breeds and ages, however breeds including Himalayans, Persians and Somalis are more commonly affected.

### **Why does it happen?**

Dental disease is commonly associated with the development of stomatitis. Plaque (bacteria) accumulates on the surfaces of the teeth, causing inflammation of the gums and surrounding structures. It is thought that this disease is immune-mediated, where the cats own immune system attacks the tissue in response to plaque accumulation. This response is abnormal. Other conditions have also been found to be associated with the development of stomatitis. These include Feline Leukemia virus (FeLV), Feline Immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and Feline Calicivirus. A bacterial infection, Bartonellosis has also been found to be associated with its development.

### **What are the signs of stomatitis?**

Signs include bad breath with red and inflamed gums. The inflammation can spread to adjacent teeth and to the back of the throat.

Eating and swallowing may become difficult and painful in severe cases, with some cats

having excess salivation and even bloody discharge. Cats with stomatitis can also have resorptive lesions, where the inflamed gum grows into a tooth to try and plug the hole where the root of the tooth has been eroded away.

### **How do we diagnose stomatitis?**

A thorough history and clinical exam is enough for a diagnosis. Inflammation that has lasted a while and is widespread is typical for this condition.

### **What is the treatment?**

Medical treatment can provide short-term control of the disease, however fails to give a good result long term. Daily tooth brushing is usually required, along with the addition of dental treats and biscuits. Anti-inflammatory and antibiotic medications may also be used initially.

Surgical treatment provides immediate relief and effective long term control. Extraction of all the affected teeth, with wide excision of inflamed tissue is required. This sounds drastic but is the only way in which to alleviate symptoms and 'cure' the condition. After this, some cases may still require immunosuppressive medication to control the inflammation.