



Feline Stomatitis

Stomatitis is often used to describe any inflammatory change in a cat's mouth. ("Itis" means inflammation and there are many causes of inflammation in a cat's mouth). The word stoma means opening and in this case the cat's oral cavity or mouth. Other terms used are Gingivostomatitis or Feline Lymphocytic Plasmacytic Stomatitis/Gingivitis (FLPSG). There is no known specific cause of stomatitis at this time other than it is an abnormal immune response. Cats can have localized areas of inflammation or the entire oral cavity can be affected. Cats may have halitosis (bad breath), paw at the face, drooling, have anorexia or weight loss. The cat may have difficulty swallowing, prefer soft food, stop grooming or have a decreased appetite. Cats that are severely affected will typically have secondary problems such as periodontal disease and resorptive lesions.

A thorough oral examination under anesthesia and intra-oral radiographs of each tooth, a biopsy, and a professional prophylaxis to remove plaque and tartar buildup will help determine proper treatment. Each case has to be treated independently by the severity of the disease, pain tolerance of the cat, and the capability of the homecare provided by the owner. Conservative treatment would include a strict regime of brushing teeth daily and antibiotic therapy with frequent dental cleanings under anesthesia to remove the tartar and plaque buildup that is associated with stomatitis. Surgical treatment would include complete dental extractions of teeth with severe resorptive lesions and periodontal disease. Intra oral radiographs are taken to ensure that the entire tooth had been extracted, leaving any root tips may complicate healing and contribute to more inflammation. Most cats will experience almost an immediate relief from chronic pain after surgical treatment.

Clinical examination and a biopsy will confirm diagnoses of stomatitis. Most biopsies describe lymphocytes and plasmacytes, which are types of white blood cells. They are present during infection and part of the immune system response, which is why another name for stomatitis is Feline Lymphocytic Plasmacytic Stomatitis/Gingivitis (FLPSG). This name describes the cell types present not the cause. The reported response to tooth extraction varies from complete resolution,(60%) to greatly reduced inflammation and resolution of pain,(20%) initial improvement but requiring continued medical therapy,(13%) and no improvement .(7%)* (see references below)

The quality of life that a cat will have after surgical treatment will typically increase dramatically. The majority of cats even with full mouth extractions will be able to go back to their hard kibble, begin normal grooming, and may increase interaction with owners.

*Reiter, Alexander DVM InFocus 2005