



*Kneading Kitty's Rescue*

## Common Cat Rescue Diseases & What To Do

Previously stray or feral cats and kittens may have communicable diseases that can be passed to humans, or to other animals through contact with humans. Some diseases have long incubation periods or can be passed prior to having any visible symptoms. We work extremely hard to avoid having any sick kitties in the adoption center, but sometimes it does happen. You may come into contact with these diseases at some point while volunteering in the Adoption Center, so we want to equip you with the proper knowledge about them and our procedures for what to do.

As the first line of defense to help prevent the introduction or spread of diseases, please:

- Note any symptoms that you observe on the health log AND in the shift report that you send to the Google Group. This is what will alert the Medical Directors.
- Don't let cats in the center share litter boxes! Make sure each kennel's residents use their own and only their own litter box.
- Wash your hands often during your shift, and especially after cleaning a litter box.
- Remove and wipe down your shoes and change your clothes immediately upon returning home after your shift, prior to touching your cats at home.
- Wash your hands, arms, face, and any other part of your body that came into contact with cats in the center, prior to touching your cats at home.

In the event that a kitty in the Adoption Center is sick, please do the following:

- Keep the kitty in their assigned kennel to avoid further contact with other kitties.
- Do not allow any potential adopters to interact with the kitty.
- Put up the outside privacy screen and take down the kitty's bio card.
- Alert the Medical Directors and your shift lead, they will make arrangements to have the kitty picked up and removed from the center and handle treatment.

The most common cat rescue diseases, how to recognize them, and what to do are below:

### **Ringworm:**

- About: Ringworm is a fungus. It will show up as a scaly, itchy rash on the skin. The incubation period for this can be up to 28 days for kittens but can show up sooner.
- When to call for back-up: Shine a black light on that area and if it glows green, that means the kitty has it and should be picked up by a foster.
- What it means to you: Ringworm is highly contagious to both kitties and humans. Ringworm does not light up with a blacklight with humans so look for round, raised, itchy spots if you are concerned. You can spread it to your pets with just having it on your clothes. Even if kitties don't show the ringworm rash, they could still have it. This would be the most likely ailment to get passed from the center to you/your pet. But it is VERY treatable!

- Treatment: Our fosters use these wipes on their kitties and they can be used on humans as well called [PetMD Chlorhexidine Wipes Ketoconazole](#). Lotrimin or any anti-fungal cream can also be used. Please be diligent as it is contagious! Ensure that you clean any linens that have come in contact with it.

### **Giardia:**

- About: This is a digestive parasite that is very hard on the digestive system.
- When to call for back-up: Consistent, light brown diarrhea that is very stinky and the kitty is very ravenous when being fed, almost aggressive if other kitties are around.
- What it means to you: The good news is that it is highly unlikely to be passed onto humans AND it shows symptoms within days of infection in the kitties. Rather than infecting humans, there would be a higher likelihood of you carrying it on your clothes and your fur babies at home ingesting it.
- Treatment: Please reach out to the Medical Directors.

### **Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs):**

- About: URIs are common in kittens, but it is important to understand that there are several irritants to kittens that can have the appearance of a URI.
- When to call for back-up: A true URI is an infection that needs to be treated with antibiotics, like a sinus infection for humans. URIs can be contagious, but not as contagious as Ringworm or Giardia amongst the kittens. Symptoms include repetitive sneezing with yellow or green discharge from both the nose and eyes and is usually accompanied by labored breathing or louder breathing and lethargy. The colored discharge and labored breathing are the biggest red flags.
- When to observe or treat with Terramycin: Without colored discharge and with normal breathing, but having some of the other symptoms above, please note the health log, observe, and apply some Terramycin to the affected eye if a runny eye is the symptom and it doesn't clear up within a day. A kitten or a cat moving from a foster to the center introduces a lot of new irritants for the kitty. As an example, many fosters use pellet or crystal litter with low or no dust. In the center, we use clay litter that causes dust which could cause both eye and nasal irritation.
- What it means to you: URI's are not transferable to other species and there is low risk in bringing it home to your fur babies. Though you could bring home irritants from the center so another reason to change clothes after volunteering
- Treatment: Please reach out to the Medical Directors.

### **Ear Mites:**

- About: Ear mites are microscopic bugs that infect the ears, cause irritation, and can cause long term damage if not treated. You cannot see an ear mite with your eye, but you can see the waste the ear mites make in the kitty's ears. Ear mites are contagious but very treatable.
- When to call for back-up: Ear mites are hard to diagnose before the kitty shows signs of irritation. Constant itching of the ear or neck below the ear, sometimes to the point of breaking skin, should alert you to look in said ear. You should be able to see the waste, in the form of black dirt-looking crud in the ear canal.
- What it means to you: Ear mites are not transferable to humans but can be spread to other species. There is low risk in bringing it home to your fur babies.
- Treatment: Please reach out to the Medical Directors.