

# Feline gingivitis and stomatitis



**CATS PROTECTION**  
**VETERINARY GUIDES**



*Gingivitis and stomatitis are very common in cats, as are other problems of the teeth, mouth and gums.*

## What are gingivitis and stomatitis?

- Gingivitis is an inflammation of the gums
- Stomatitis is an inflammation of the mouth and often affects the back of the mouth where the upper and lower jaws meet

For many cats, care with diet, dental hygiene and routine dental treatments help to prevent or control significant oral problems. Mild gingivitis is common, especially in kittens when their adult teeth are coming through. For affected adult cats, vets may recommend regular check-ups and/or scale and polish treatments to control the problem.

However, a smaller proportion of cats suffer from a more serious inflammation of the mouth that may not respond to treatment. This painful condition varies in severity, but can lead to bleeding, ulceration, infection and even growths in the mouth. Studies investigating the condition continue, but neither the cause nor the control of such cases is fully understood.



## What causes stomatitis and gingivitis in cats?

It is thought there may be three main contributing factors involved in both stomatitis and gingivitis, including:

- a reaction to bacterial plaque on the teeth
- a poorly functioning immune system, often due to other disease or infection with viruses that affect the immune function eg feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)
- other underlying viral infections, such as feline calici virus (FCV)

## What are the signs?

Signs that your cat may be suffering from stomatitis and gingivitis can include:

- bad breath
- dribbling
- loss of appetite
- weight loss
- bleeding gums
- pawing at the mouth
- poor coat from a lack of grooming

## How is it diagnosed?

Your vet will look for inflammation of the gums, ulcers, erosions of the teeth, plaque/tartar build-up and any signs of underlying disease. Mouth problems are often detected at the time of a routine health check, such as booster vaccinations.

Your vet will try to identify any contributing factors involved. If necessary, blood samples and oral swabs for culturing viruses and bacteria may be taken, along with a biopsy of the inflamed tissue.

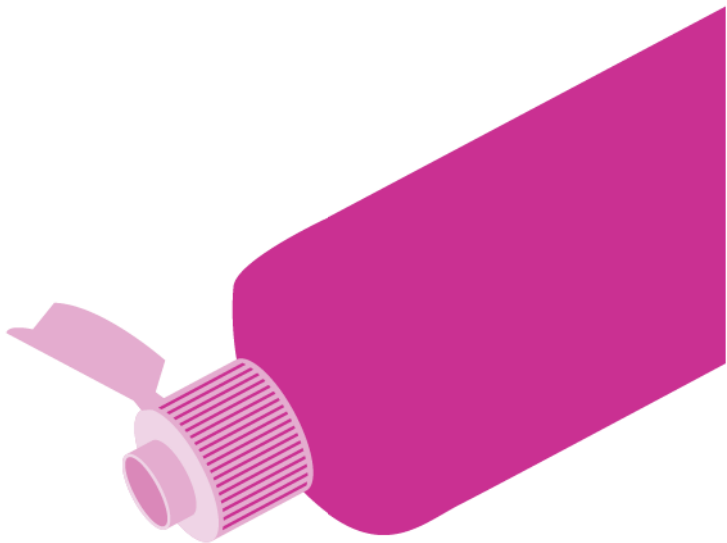
## How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- control of any contributing factors (if possible)
- removal of plaque/tartar and damaged teeth. In some cases, extraction of all the teeth can alleviate the problem. Surprisingly, most cats cope well without any teeth
- brushing of the teeth or use of specially-formulated mouthwashes. Some cats will tolerate this better than others – it helps to start brushing their teeth when they are young
- specific dental diets
- supportive care to prompt appetite, grooming etc
- long-term oral medication, such as antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and pain relief may be required in some cases. Some cats may be difficult to medicate by mouth if the mouth is sore, so they may require regular injections

## Will my cat get better?

Depending on the cause and severity of the condition, some cases cannot be cured and long-term treatment may be required to manage the condition. In some cases, cats respond so well to treatment and dental management that they recover completely.



This leaflet is one of a range provided by  
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