

Feline Vomiting

**What causes vomiting?**

Vomiting is not a disease; rather, it is a symptom of many different diseases. Many cases of vomiting are self-limiting after a few days. Less commonly, vomiting may result from a serious illness, such as cancer. Even vomiting caused by mild illnesses may become fatal if treatment to prevent severe fluid and nutrient loss is not started soon enough.

**How serious is vomiting in cats?**

Severity depends on how sick the cat has become as a consequence of the vomiting. When the cat is systemically ill (i.e., more than one body system is involved), some of the following may be noted:

* Diarrhea
* Dehydration
* Loss of appetite
* Abdominal pain
* High fever
* Lethargy
* Bloody vomit

**What types of tests are performed to find the cause?**

If vomiting is associated with several of the above signs, a series of tests may be performed. These diagnostic tests include radiography (X-rays) with or without barium, blood tests, stool cultures, biopsies of the intestinal tract and exploratory abdominal surgery. Once the diagnosis is known, treatment may include special medications and/or diets or surgery.

If your cat does not appear systemically ill from vomiting, the cause may be less serious. Some minor causes of vomiting include stomach or intestinal viruses, intestinal parasites and dietary indiscretions (such as eating garbage or other offensive or irritating materials).

A minimal number of tests are performed to rule out certain parasites and infections. These cases may be treated with drugs to control the motility of the intestinal tract or relieve inflammation in the intestinal tract, as well as a restricted diet for a few days. This approach allows the body's healing mechanisms to correct the problem.

We expect to see improvement within two to four days. If this does not occur, a change in medication or further tests may be performed to better understand the problem.