



Cat Haven Information Sheet - Diarrhoea in Cats

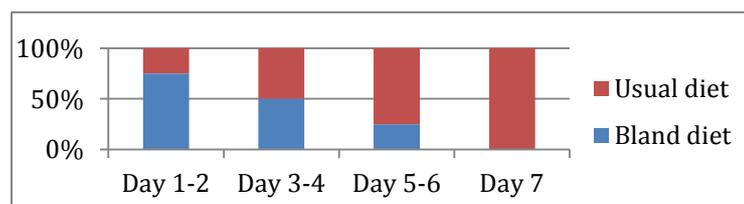
Diarrhoea in cats and especially kittens is a relatively common problem seen at Cat Haven. There are many different possible causes for this problem and thus it can be difficult to diagnose the specific cause. Most cases of diarrhoea will however respond to similar treatment regimes regardless of the cause.

At Cat Haven the most common causes we see are the following:

- **Sudden change in diet:** Cats take time to adjust to a new diet, and any new food should ideally be introduced over a period of a week. Kittens are especially sensitive to any new food, and just **one meal of a different food can result in diarrhoea.**
- **Intestinal parasites:** At Cat Haven all cats are treated with broad spectrum de-worming products. In some cases if there is a very severe worm burden, the cat may require several treatments to get rid of all the worms.
- **Toxin ingestion:** Cats sometimes come to us with a history of having been found in an area where they were eating old food scraps. This food may contain toxins resulting in food poisoning.
- **Stress:** Stress has a very powerful effect on the immune system and can lower defences against disease.
- **Milk and other dairy products:** These contain lactose which cannot be digested by cats (and some people!) Appropriate substitutes for milk include cat milk and lactose-free milk. Remember that your pet does not require anything in addition to a complete and balanced food, and fresh clean water.

As mentioned above, the treatment is often the same regardless of the cause, and normally includes the following:

- **Fasting:** Depending on their age, cats are fasted for a period of 12-48 hours. **Your cat should NOT be fasted from water.** Sometimes animals with diarrhoea are dehydrated, and withholding water could make a sick cat much worse. During the period of fasting, sugar and electrolytes can be supplemented with solution such as "Lectade" or "Vytrate".
- **Bland Diet:** Following the initial period of fasting, a bland diet is fed normally for a period of 3-5 days. At Cat Haven we recommend feeding Hills i/d (Intestinal Diet) as per the manufacturer's instructions, or thoroughly cooked chicken breast. (Boiling is good since no fat is required in the cooking process). The amount fed will depend on the size of the cat. Hills i/d can be fed to kittens as their usual diet, so feeding with this can continue after the "bland diet" stage.
- **Gradual introduction onto normal diet:** **Following the period of feeding bland food, a gradual introduction back onto the usual diet can take place over a period of 1 week, and can be done as follows:**



- **Other treatments which are sometimes used are:**
 - **Worming treatment:** This may be repeated if a severe worm burden is suspected
 - **Probiotics:** This may help to balance the normal bacterial flora of the intestines quicker
 - **Antimicrobials:** These may be indicated if the cat has a fever or is passing blood and/mucous with the faeces

If a cat has a prolonged bout of diarrhoea, diagnostic tests may be indicated (eg. Testing against Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Feline Leukaemia Virus, faecal testing, blood testing, gut biopsies). There are some rarer cases of diarrhoea that do not respond to any treatment, are extremely difficult to diagnose, and may continue for many months before resolving.