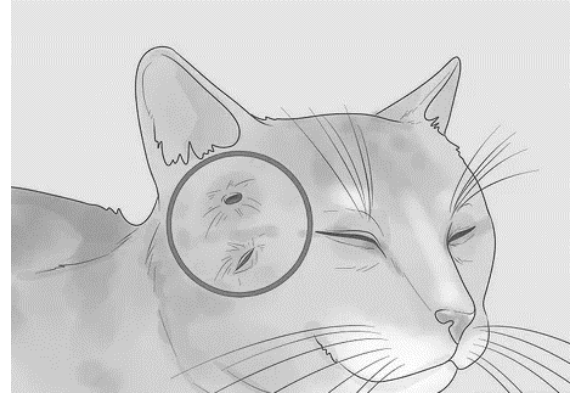




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Cat Bite Abscess After Care Handout

This is by far the most common injury that we see in cats. As the title suggests, abscesses form in cats as a result of fights with other cats. Initially, the wounds that cause them are usually rather small – especially from bites or possibly from puncture wounds made with the claws. Often these small wounds go unnoticed, or you might figure that they're small and not painful, so you don't do anything about them.

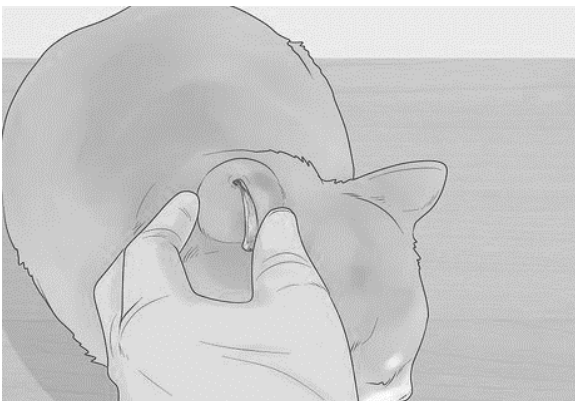


What causes cat bite abscesses?

Cat bites carry LOTS of bacteria into the wound. Treatment with antibiotics at this early stage can prevent formation of an abscess. But without appropriate treatment, these bacteria will multiply. Within a few days, significant amounts of pus are produced. By this time the original puncture wound has closed over, with nowhere to go, the pus builds up in the area beneath the wound. It becomes swollen, painful and the toxins produced by the bacteria will destroy the surrounding tissues (fat, muscle, and skin). The infection may also cause your cat to run a high temperature, go off its food and become quite ill.

Treatment for cat bite abscesses?

At this stage, anaesthesia and surgery is often the only successful form of treatment. The key is to remove the pocket of pus, either by surgical removal, or by draining and flushing. The pus must be drained away and infected tissues removed. Sometimes a rubber tube (drain) will be placed in the wound to allow extra pus and fluids to escape over the next few days. We will book a revisit to have this drain removed, with one of our veterinarians.



Antibiotics will be used to clean up the remaining infection and analgesics given for the pain. Appropriate antibiotic therapy is a critical component of the successful treatment of abscesses, no matter the location.

If the wound has been deliberately left open to allow for drainage. It is advisable to clean the wound twice a day for two to three days to keep it open, using cotton balls, gauze, or a washcloth and warm water. Mix a 1 teaspoon of salt to cup of previously boiled water. If a skin cleanser or surgical soap is necessary, we will prescribe it.

Only use products that are recommended by your veterinarian. **NEVER use disinfectants containing phenols, as these are toxic to cats.** Never use hydrogen peroxide for cleaning a drained abscess, since this will delay healing and can worsen the problem.

Should you have any enquiries or further concerns about the care of your cat, please do not hesitate to phone us at (03) 358 4407 to discuss. We hope they have a smooth recovery and get well soon!

Warmest wishes, the team at Avonhead Veterinary Clinic