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Foster Cat Journal: Difficulty Breathing

Tue, 2009-10-20 13:17 — Robin Olson

A week ago I brought the four rescue kittens from SC to the Vet. A few had the sniffles and some eye discharge, so they were all put on Clavamox for the next 10 days. None of them were in bad shape, but I wanted to make sure they stayed that way.

For the next few days, the cats seemed basically all right. They played, ate well, sneezed. I did my best to keep my hands clean and began changing my clothes after I had any exposure to the kittens. I was very uncomfortable and uptight. I did not want my cats to get sick, too.

Then on Saturday, Monte started sneezing. Prior to that he'd been doing great, with no signs of trouble. On Sunday, his brother Dylan and sister, Delilah got adopted, but they had to stay behind because I can't let them go to their new home until everyone is feeling better.

Sunday night Monte really started to sound terrible. His sinuses were clogged, he blew a bubble out of his nose. He snorted like a stuffed up Daffy Duck. It was terrible. I know that URI's are viral, so only the secondary infections can be treated. Rest, fluids, running a humidifier, that's about it. I called the 24 hr ER Vet and asked if I should bring him in, but they told me if he was eating, had pink gums and didn't have a fever, he was OK to wait until morning. So, I tried to stick a thermometer up Monte's little butt hole. Yeah, that was fun. Temp was 100.5° F. Then I looked at his gums and they were pink and he did eat for me, he just sounded horrific.



Next morning, I went to check in on Monte and he sounded so bad that I just left the room, got the phone and called the Vet for an appointment. They were able to squeeze us in if I could get there before 10AM. It was just 8:30, but I was still bleary, having hardly slept and fighting off a cold or something myself for the past few days.



I got dressed quickly and Monte and I were on the road in a few minutes. We hit terrible rush hour (why do they call it RUSH? no one can go fast enough to RUSH!) traffic and it took about a million years to get to the Clinic, all while Monte was snorting and crying the entire trip. I was terrified he would crash on me on the way there.

George, the cute tech got Monte weighed and temped. He was at 101, which is still normal. The Vet did her exam and had George get an x-ray of Monte's lungs to rule out pneumonia!!! His lungs looked basically all right, but she felt he did have Bronchitis and a sore throat, not to mention an eye infection. She loaded me up with meds. Monte is on 6 different medications, to be given three times a day until they run out. I need to bring him back in a week for a re-check, if he doesn't get worse, first.



I asked about ways to reduce transmission to my cats and she told me this stuff is airborne, so basically I'm screwed. I'm taking my clothes off before I enter the foster room, then changing into clothes I have that are contaminated, that are in the room. When I leave, I just strip and run down the hall into the shower and put on fresh clothes. This is a huge pain in the ass. I hope it works. I have gone from being concerned to being outright terrified that my cats are going to get this stuff. Monte is so ill that if Bob catches what Monte has, it could kill Bob or Spencer (who has chronic breathing problems already).

Last year all my cats got sick. Each one had to be medicated daily for two weeks, twice a day. Bob and Spencer had to be locked in our bedroom with a humidifier and isolated. It was touch and go for a few days. I was horrified I'd lose them. Here I

am once again, facing the same fear, about ten times more intensely.

I can't focus and am having a tough time doing anything. I just want to sit with Monte and hold him until he's all better. His siblings are all sick now, but none of them are in as bad shape-thank goodness. Trying to get them all healthy is a nightmare. I'm not sure if I'm giving them the URI by not sterilizing their eyedroppers each time. I'm definitely overwhelmed and angry at myself and wishing it was all done and over. I have to find a way to just ride this difficult time and do my best for the cats. I feel like I should know more and that I'm messing it up. Monte is 12 weeks old. I hope he's old enough to kick this. So far, I've never lost a kitten and I don't want to start now.

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Comments

Tue, 2009-10-20 13:40 — [ADS](#) ^[7]

In my thoughts ^[8]

All of you are in my thoughts: Monte, his sibs, you, all your kitties. You are doing all you can do, and you are doing it very well. It is tough seeing such a sick kitty and worrying about the others, but they are all in good hands.

Tue, 2009-10-20 14:04 — [Luna \(not verified\)](#) ^[9]

What a story! You're doing a ^[10]

What a story! You're doing a terrific job, so hang in there. URI are tough on kitties, but Monte and the crew are aware of your love and care, and that's a huge part of their recovery. Sending you all lots of cuddles and soothing purrs. Keep us posted.

Tue, 2009-10-20 14:21 — [AnnaBanana74](#) ^[11]

Poor kid! And poor you. I ^[12]

Poor kid! And poor you. I know the anxiety you're feeling. Do you have scrubs you can pull on over your clothes and leave in the foster room? They were useful to me when I worked at the shelter - Lord knows I was always in danger of tracking something in. There were times I'd catch my cats in my laundry pile, and they never contracted URI from that. Jack did develop a mild after he was exposed to a kitten that developed one, but I had him on Clavamox the second I detected a drop of snot. We never want to overmedicate our cats, but how do you feel about slipping a wee bit of Clavamox to the big boys for the next couple of days just in case?

If a kitten ends up with a URI, it's best when they're a bit older. Monte's much more capable of fighting it at 12 weeks than he would have been at 4. In regard to your concern about the eye dropper - they're already exposed. They were exposed before they came to you, and you did nothing to make them sick. They've had very stressful little lives, and while I know they're so happy to be with you, they must have been beside themselves on the trip, not knowing what was going to happen to them. We'd all get sick if we were in their paws!

You're doing right by them, and you're doing right by your cats.

Tue, 2009-10-20 16:29 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[13]

XOXOX ^[14]

Thank you very much for the kind words! I know it could be so much worse and gee, there's nothing wrong with being REALLY CLEAN, other than my skin is totally drying out from the number of showers I have to take. I'd rather do that than look at Bob or Spencer and see them suffering with illness, so I hope like heck, the fact that my cats are not stressed, have good food, have good overall health, KNOCK WOOD, that they won't get anything from the fosters.

Speaking of which...time to get up there. Good idea about the scrubs, but I don't have any. I'll just run around nekkid! Sam doesn't seem to mind for some reason ;-)

Wed, 2009-10-21 07:39 — [isilwath](#) ^[15]

LOL ^[16]

well, running around nekkid might work for a bit, until the cats started climbing your legs.

My hands dry out something awful in winter too (I'm a CNA). I have this cream I got from my doc that works great, but it has urea in it so it smells funny. :/

Good luck w/ the babies. I've had to nurse a couple of babies thru this and one never got rid of the snots. I still have her years later, and years later she still blows snot 24/7, but is otherwise healthy. I actually have 2 like that, but one is significantly worse than the other.

My vet says sometimes it never clears up, esp if they were born w/ it like the one was, and you just have to treat the symptoms if they get too bad. I am hoping Monte makes a full recovery.

Tue, 2009-10-20 16:40 — Lizzie (not verified)

Good Wishes [17]

It sounds as if you are doing all you possibly can - and then some! You're so caring and good to these kitties, but don't forget to try and take care of you too...

I can understand your fear of carrying an infection to your own cats. Anna's idea of scrubs sounds quite good. Do your DIY stores sell painting overalls that would do? You could slip them over your normal clothes and leave them behind when you leave the room?

I hope they all turn the corner very soon and are better quickly.

Sending good wishes to you and all your feline friends.

xx

Tue, 2009-10-20 21:12 — catsrthebest (not verified)

Ask your vet [18]

Hi Robin. Sounds like you are doing everything possible for these babies. I would ask the vet for additional eyedroppers and possibly a separate bottle of eye medicine for each cat. Not sure about cats but viruses are spread through contact with eyes nose or mouth with humans. Your vet will know a lot more than me though. Best wishes and hugs for you and these precious babies

Tue, 2009-10-20 22:01 — [thethumbedinden...](#) [19]

As a human infectious [20]

As a human infectious diseases doc, I want to reassure you that you're doing all the right things. There's not a lot you can do about viral infections except vaccines (which don't exist for most of these respiratory viruses). At least we can all be grateful that kitties don't get swine flu!

Tue, 2009-10-20 22:33 — [Robin Olson](#) [13]

LOL! [21]

I am really glad for that!!!! Don't want to imagine if what the kittens have is contagious to PEOPLE or if they COULD get H1N1. Ack! Please no...that would be so terrible for so many shelters/pets. Shudder to imagine...

I should have had sep. syringes for the meds for each cat. That would have helped. Too late now, so we move forward. I hear bouncing around upstairs above my office. The kittens are playing. Good sign. Off to check on them now.

Thanks all for the warm wishes. You're da best!

Tue, 2009-10-20 22:23 — [Shelli](#) [22]

Love is a VERY powerful [23]

Love is a VERY powerful medicine.

Keep up the good work.

And pour yourself a glass of wine. In your hazmat suit.

Actually, a simple painter's outfit - those white tyvek like jumpsuits? might be good to have a few hanging out, cat hair won't stick to it as much as cotton, and it could help a bit.

Tue, 2009-10-20 23:17 — [Your Daily Cute \(not verified\)](#) [24]

Good thoughts! [25]

You are doing great, and the kitties will do great. Poor little Monte, he even looks stuffy and sick in that picture. :(

You are an amazing person for doing all this to help out. These kittens are so lucky to have you to care for them and love them. I hope for the best -- and I know they're getting the best care with you!

Get well soon, everyone!

Wed, 2009-10-21 02:41 — [acninee](#) [26]

I hope Monte feels better ^[27]

I hope Monte feels better soon, and none of the other kitties catch it. I am wondering if these symptoms are ever allergy rather than infection?

Wed, 2009-10-21 12:46 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#) ^[28]

I feel your pain ^[29]

I foster too but live in a 1 bedroom NY city apartment with my 2 grown boy cats. I have a foster HATTIE at the moment that looks sooo much like the pics you posted. Her eyes are a HOT MESS and the vet is trying to save them. She had a very bad herpes infection and lots of scar tissue. it seems in trying to remove scar tissue it re-activated the infection some how and now she has an eye ulcer : (

Plus she has a terrible cold - i sit in the bathroom with her as the hot water runs.

of course NOW, after she's been at my house for weeks, they tell me i should separate her from my other cat. Great! So she is in my room and no one is happy about it.

That's amazing that you foster so many rescues!!!!

T

Single in the city - with cat (s)

<http://ihavecat.wordpress.com> ^[28]

Wed, 2009-10-21 21:36 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[13]

L-Lysine ^[30]

I hope your sick foster is getting L-Lysine in her food or by mouth. It's supposed to really help contain with the herpes outbreaks. It comes in a paste. Here's a free plug for a place that sells it:

<http://www.healthypets.com/enisoral.html> ^[31]

I'm using it on my foster kittens now.

Hope your kitty gets better soon. Hang in there!

Thu, 2009-10-22 14:39 — [AnnaBanana74](#) ^[11]

I've also used L-Lysine on my ^[32]

I've also used L-Lysine on my cats and fosters. I crush a little and mix it with their soft food. It works wonders.

Tue, 2012-08-14 00:18 — [Sweetharte](#) ^[33]

Monte looks like my Cat 5. I ^[34]

Monte looks like my Cat 5. I hope he made out OK. Poor guy.

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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