

Cryptococcosis in Cats

Overview

As with humans, cats can get [fungal infections](#). They are fairly common and can be caused by several different types of fungi-one being a yeast-like fungus called cryptococcus. This fungus, which is often inhaled through the nose, is present in soil and often spread by birds, especially pigeons.

Symptoms

Infected cats often have vague and nondescript symptoms, such as weight loss and [lethargy](#). Many will have sores resembling fight wounds on their noses or skin. In some cases, a cat may exhibit [neurological signs](#), such as a head tilt or incoordination. You may also see sneezing and discharge from your pet's nose and eyes.

Diagnosis/Treatment

In order to identify if this yeast-like fungus is the cause of your cat's symptoms, your veterinarian may recommend the following:

- A complete physical exam and medical history
- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver, and pancreatic function, as well as sugar levels
- Serologic tests to identify if your pet has been exposed to any infectious diseases
- A complete blood count to rule out certain blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests to ensure your pet isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- Urine tests to screen for urinary tract infection and other disease
- Radiographs (x-rays)
- A culture of eye/nose discharge
- A biopsy of nasal tissue to identify causative organisms

If your veterinarian determines your pet has this fungal infection, he or she may suggest the following based on your cat's individual case:

- Inpatient supportive care, if your cat is showing neurological signs
- Surgery, if nodules in the nose are present as a result of the infection
- Oral antifungal medication

If oral antifungal medication is prescribed, your veterinarian may also recommend blood tests to monitor your cat's organ function and follow-up tests to identify response to treatment.

Prevention

Keeping your cat away from areas with large volumes of pigeon droppings is one way to avoid cryptococcosis.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.