



Asthma in cats information sheet.

Feline Asthma is a chronic inflammation of the lungs that principally presents in cats as coughing, sometimes wheezing and exercise intolerance.

How do you know its asthma?

Typically cats have a history of chronic coughing, sometimes this may seem as though they are trying to bring up a hairball. Sometimes the episode can be acute and cats can present to us mouth breathing and struggling for air.

What tests do you normally do?

Firstly a chest examination with a stethoscope to listen for heart problems and other abnormalities is made. Often full bloods to include haematology and biochemistry are recommended. We may well recommend to exclude Felv and FIV viruses again by blood tests. Ultimately a chest xray under anaesthesia usually proves the best way to reach a diagnosis.

On chest xray we are looking for a bronchial pattern (like doughnuts), and we may also see an abnormality called atelectasis of the middle lung lobe.

Bronchoalveolar lavage which is a wash sample collected from within the airway under anaesthesia may also help in the diagnosis.

How can we treat our cat if it is asthma?

Firstly we have to think about management factors that may help.

We will recommend worming with panacur for 5 to 7 days as sometimes worms may stimulate the allergic response in the airway.

Additionally control of house dust mite is important, as just like in human asthma this is often the trigger factor for asthma. Keeping cats out of bedrooms can be of help as house dust mite populations are highest here. A good airing of the house is useful.

Specific treatments

Prednisilone

The mainstay treatment of asthma in cats is prednisilone or methylprednisilone, it reduces the inflammation and reduces the mucous production which in turn helps reduce the coughing and symptoms.

Doxycycline

We usually recommend a two to three week course of doxycycline which is an antibiotic that concentrates in the mucous of the chest.

Clenbuterol(ventipulmin syrup)

In severe cases short term use of this bronchodilator may be indicated.

Inhalers

Yes. Some cats will tolerate the administration of their drugs via an inhaler. This is not suitable for all cats. The AeroKat spacer provides an option to facilitate this.

Depo steroid injections

Not all cats are good at taking their medicines. This longterm steroid injection can be helpful in these cases, but is not usually our first drug of choice.

Drug dosage regimes

Prednisilone initially 1mg/kg bid tapering to 0.5mg/kg eod

Doxycycline 5 to 10 mg/kg sid 2 to 3 weeks

Clenbuterol(ventipulmin syrup) in crisis 1microgram/kg bid

Fluticasone(Flixotide 250microgMDI) via aeroKat 2 to 3 puffs bid

*Clenbuterol inhaled(ventolin 100microgMDI) via aeroKat 2 puffs every few hours
in crisis*