



The Cat House

Dedicated to the welfare of the felines of Nebraska
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The Vet's Corner

The guest veterinarian in this issue is Dr Susan Little, DVM. Dr Little has a practice in Ottawa, Canada at Bytown Cat Hospital. She earned the coveted title of Diplomate ABVP (feline), one of the highest awards of her profession.

Nasopharyngeal polyps are a cause of chronic respiratory signs in cats. The polyps grow from the middle ear, and can either grow down the eustachian tube to the back of the throat or up the external ear canal.

The cause is not fully understood. It is very often a disease of young cats. One theory is that they are a congenital defect of the fetal structure called the first pharyngeal pouch. Another theory is that they are caused by chronic inflammatory middle ear disease usually associated with chronic upper respiratory infections.

Most cats are under 1.5 yrs old when they are diagnosed, but they can be older. I got slammed on this list (The Fancier's List on the Internet) a few years ago for saying that Abyss seem to be predisposed, but I will stand by it and take the heat again! Polyps do appear in other breeds, for sure, and also in

in non-purebreds. The most common symptoms are noisy breathing, difficulty breathing, nasal discharge, sneezing, coughing and difficulty swallowing. If the polyp is in the ear canal, the cat may have an ear infection with discharge, irritation and sometimes a head tilt. Typically, the condition is under diagnosed.

Polyps can sometimes be seen easily if they are in the ear canal, but most cats need to be sedated to have the back of the throat examined, especially up under the soft palate, in order to find the polyp. Surgical removal is the treatment of choice.

There are two methods. One is conservative and involves grasping the polyp as close to its base as possible and using traction to remove it. About 50% of polyps regrow using this method. The other method is an involved surgical procedure called a bulla osteotomy where the middle ear is opened and the polyp is removed that way. It is associated with a higher complication rate but a lower recurrence rate.

Susan Little DVM
Diplomate ABVP



CAT LAWS

Law of Cat Motion:

A cat will move in a straight line, unless there is a really good reason to change direction.

Law of Cat Magnetism:

All blue blazers and black sweaters attract cat hair in direct proportion to the darkness of the fabric.

Dominance Disputes

Unlike dogs and other pack species, cats don't group themselves according to well defined *dominance hierarchies*. But they aren't complete socialists either. In multicat households, one feline will often take on the mantle of "top cat" - demanding the choicest nap spots and/or food treats and keeping the other cats inline with an imperious paw or a no-nonsense glare. As long as everyone agrees to this "benign despotism," all is well. But if there is dissension in the ranks, feuding may ensue. If such a dominance dispute occurs in your household, remember these "do's" and "don'ts":

Do:

- ✓ BREAK UP SERIOUS FIGHTS. But do it from a distance-using either a squirt of water or a loud noise so you'll avoid injury, and your cats won't learn to associate you with the punishment.
- ✓ PROVIDE ESCAPE ROUTES. Cats don't have submissive signals like dogs do, so a subordinate cat's only means of diffusing tension is to run away. Such a cat will usually try to hide or climb. So make sure you have plenty of cat-accessible hidey-holes and perches.

- ✓ WATCH YOUR CATS CAREFULLY. Note which cats quarrel and in what situations. Try to identify the more dominant cat by seeing which animal prevails in stand-offs and staredowns.

Don'ts:

- × DON'T BUCK THE SYSTEM. Owners sometimes inadvertently exacerbate aggression by reprimanding the dominant cat and coddling the "undercat." Remember, the top cat is only doing what comes naturally. Although it goes against the grain, you may be better off if you greet, feed, and pet the dominant cat first and pay a little less attention to the subordinate animal when the "boss" is around.
- × GIVE UP. It could take several months for disputing cats to settle into a comfortable dominance arrangement. If your cats continue to fight after that, consult your veterinarian about behavioral therapy and *psychotropic* medication that could help alleviate aggression and fear.

From Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine's CATNIP, A Newsletter for Caring Cat Owners



- On The first day of creation, God created the cat.
- On the 2nd day, god created man (and woman) to serve the cat.
- On the third, God created all the animals of the earth to serve as potential food for the cat
- On the fourth day, God created honest toil so that man (and woman) could labor for the good of the cat.
- On the fifth day, God created the sparkle ball so that the cat might or might not play with it.
- On the sixth day, God created veterinary science to keep the cat healthy and the man (and woman) broke.
- On the seventh day, God tried to rest, but she had to scoop the litter box.