



FELINE VIRAL RHINOTRACHEITIS

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Feline viral rhinotracheitis (FVR) is a common respiratory and ophthalmic (eye) virus in feline patients caused by the feline herpes virus. This virus is spread in stressed conditions (multiple-cat households, shelters, overcrowding, etc.).

For both the respiratory and ophthalmic clinical signs, kittens tend to exhibit more severe symptoms, whereas adults often have mild symptoms.

Respiratory symptoms may include:

- Sneezing
- Nasal discharge and crusting
- Sometimes bronchitis and pneumonia, unless complicated by secondary bacterial infection

Ophthalmic symptoms may include:

- Swollen, irritated conjunctiva
- Excessive eye watering and discharge in early stages
- Reduced tear production in chronic cases
- Corneal inflammation
- Sometimes corneal ulceration

Unfortunately, even once patients have recovered, they can remain as life-long carriers with spontaneous recurrence.

A vaccine for **FVR** exists and is included in the routine annual combination vaccine given to feline patients. This combination vaccine is abbreviated the FVRCP vaccine which is an abbreviation for **feline viral rhinotracheitis/calicivirus/panleukopenia virus/chlamydia**. The most effective vaccination series starts as a kitten and is carried through adulthood.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

A diagnosis is most often made following a physical examination performed by a veterinarian, combined with clinical signs and symptoms.

An oral-nasal swab can be taken from patients and sent off for specific viral testing. More often, patients will have a combination respiratory panel performed instead of single viral testing.

TREATMENT

There are no specific treatments for upper respiratory viral infections. Treatment is aimed at controlling clinical signs, treating secondary bacterial infection, and preventing spread to other feline patients.

Many patients have self-limiting symptoms that will resolve without treatment.

Patients are often given ophthalmic medications to help soothe the irritated eyes, occasionally oral pain medications, sometimes oral anti-inflammatories, and rarely require hospitalization.

Antibiotics are only beneficial if secondary bacterial infections are suspected.

The dietary supplement lysine is recommended in single- or multiple-cat households where **FVR** may be present. This compound acts to suppress the virus's ability to replicate and is included in most management and control strategies.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Antibiotics will not treat any viral infection.
 - Many patients have self-limiting symptoms that will resolve without treatment.
- Vaccinate kittens and adults on a regular schedule to minimize risk of infection.