



BITE ABSCESS

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Percutaneous cellulitis or a bite abscess forms when a penetrating bite wound traps bacteria underneath the skin which creates a pocket of infection which leads to swelling, pain and sometimes a fever.

Outdoor cats are especially prone because they are more likely to get into fights with other animals. Aside from bacterial infections, feline patients may also spread viruses through the bite wounds. Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) represents one of the more common viral infections spread by bite wounds. Patients should be tested for FIV 60 days or more after the time of the bite. Please the [Feline Immunodeficiency Virus](#) document for additional information.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Veterinarians typically identify an abscess during a physical examination by feeling for warmth, swelling, or discharge.

Blood tests can help determine how the infection is impacting the cat's immune system and overall health.

In cases where the wound is deep or not responding to initial treatment, a sample may be collected for culture to identify the specific bacteria and select the most effective antibiotics.

TREATMENT

Treatment usually includes pain relief, anti-inflammatory medication, and a course of antibiotics to clear the infection.

If the abscess has not ruptured on its own, the area is clipped, and the wound is carefully lanced and flushed under sedation or anesthesia.

Already open wounds receive the same cleaning process. Larger abscesses may require a temporary drain to prevent fluid buildup.

Patients must wear an e-collar to prevent licking and repeated wound contamination.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Watch outdoor cats for sudden tiredness, limping, swelling, or pain.
- Get them checked early to keep the problem small and healing faster.
- No licking— it makes things worse, not better.
- Daily cleaning matters just as much as the medications.