

# Town of Apple Valley Animal Shelter



## Feline Health Alert!

The High Desert area, as well as other communities, has experienced a reoccurrence of feline upper respiratory infections (URI) that has, at times, reached near epidemic proportions. As a result, some of the animals coming into our shelter have been exposed to these viruses. Like colds in humans, URI infections are common especially when large numbers of cats are housed together as typically seen in shelters and kennels. URI infections are contagious to other cats and can be spread in the air, by direct contact, or on unwashed hands moving from one cat to another.

It is likely that many cats and kittens entering the shelter have never been vaccinated to protect them against upper respiratory infections and as a result, have little or no protection to the illness.




While the Town does not knowingly expose animals in our kennels to these viruses, and even though we take precautionary measures such as sanitizing our kennels, respiratory infections may still afflict some animals. Exposed animals are not easily detected until they show physical signs of illness. Unfortunately, an exposed animal may be contagious before it shows clinical signs of the disease. Consequently, as long as these viruses exist in our community, we will continue to have some animals contract them.

Some common symptoms of an upper respiratory infection include:

-  **Sneezing**
-  **Nasal and/or Eye Discharge**
-  **Decreased Appetite and/or Thirst**
-  **Lethargy**

Because these viruses may be contagious during the incubation period when there are no obvious signs, we suggest that you keep him/her separated from your other cats for a minimum of three weeks. Depending on the age and health of your newly adopted cat, he/she may have received an initial vaccination while at the shelter.

Remember, the easiest and most cost effective way to keep your animal healthy is to:

-  **See a Veterinarian Regularly**
-  **Vaccinate According to Your Veterinarian's Recommendations**
-  **Keep Your Cat Indoors**

As an adopter of a cat or kitten, we want you to be as informed as possible about the health of the animal you are taking home. **We cannot, however, guarantee that the cat you are adopting has not been exposed to a serious, possibly fatal, virus.**

