

## Stomatitis in Cats

Jan Bellows, DVM, DAVDC

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Cats can be affected by inflammation of the entire mouth, called stomatitis or feline gingivostomatitis (FGS). An immune-related cause is suspected due to the large amount of plasma cells encountered on microscopic examination of the inflamed tissues. Some of the affected cats have difficulty eating, weight loss, decreased grooming, and excess salivation.



Photo by Dr. Jan Bellows

Oral examination often reveals redness in the throat area and severe inflammation where the teeth and gums meet. The cheeks are usually affected more than the canines and incisors. In addition to generalized inflammation, there may be all stages of [tooth resorption](#).

The cause of feline stomatitis is thought to be an exaggerated immune response to plaque. The cat actually becomes allergic to its own teeth. In the past, therapy options for feline

stomatitis included thorough teeth cleaning and polishing, fluoride, corticosteroids, gold therapy, antibiotics, lasers and daily brushing. In most cases cats were only temporarily helped with these therapies and the cats remained in pain.

The treatment of choice is decrease the plaque retentive surfaces in the mouth, which usually involves removing many teeth. After a tooth-by-tooth examination, including dental x-rays, the veterinarian determines which teeth need to be extracted. In some severe cases all of the teeth are surgically removed. Fortunately domesticated cats do not need their teeth to survive. The mouth heals in a short time and the cat is back to eating better than ever before!



Photo by Dr. Jan Bellows

Tooth extraction improves the lives of most cats affected by stomatitis. Some will need additional medication and therapy.



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