

Points on Pets: Sore tongue may be responsible for dirty cat

by R.G._Elmor_DVM

Q: We are worried about our 6-year-old cat. She used to groom herself constantly, but she has stopped and now looks unkempt. Our cat has almost quit eating and appears to be losing weight.

She looks really ragged. We are concerned about what has happened to our little darling. What is causing our cat's deterioration?

A: It is impossible to tell you what has caused your cat's decline without actually seeing her. You should take your cat to your veterinarian as soon as possible for a complete physical examination. Your veterinarian will give you recommendations on how to care for her while she is sick. In addition to the physical examination, your veterinarian might want to submit some blood samples for diagnostic tests or even some X-rays.

Although there are many possible reasons for her decline, she might be suffering from a sore tongue. It is a condition called glossitis. Cats with glossitis often stop grooming themselves, become lazy and experience weight loss because it is difficult to eat. These cats are ragged in appearance and gradually deteriorate.

Glossitis can be caused by several things like burns due to licking caustic materials or cold objects, and by scratching their tongues on burrs in their hair coats. It is easy for foreign objects such as plant awns, splinters and needles to become embedded in the tongue, leading to severe soreness. Occasionally cats get string wrapped around the base of their tongues. This usually causes soreness and the cat will quit licking and eating.

The feline respiratory disease complex, a debilitating condition, often causes cats to have sore tongues and cold-like signs. These signs include discharges from the eyes and nose as well as frequent sneezing. The feline respiratory complex is contagious and usually spreads quickly through all of the cats within a household.

As stated earlier, you should take your cat to your veterinarian as soon as possible for a diagnosis and treatment. Delaying treatment could make the situation much worse.

Q: We have a friend who feeds his dog chocolate raisins. We have heard that both chocolate and raisins are poisonous for dogs. Have we been misinformed?

A: You are correct in that both chocolate and raisins are toxic for dogs. Raisins can cause acute

gastrointestinal problems such as vomiting and kidney failure. Other common clinical signs include lethargy, diarrhea and abdominal pain. The ingestion of raisins and grapes can kill dogs. Chocolate can also cause death in dogs by adversely affecting several organ systems, including the heart.

Your friend should not feed his dog raisins nor chocolate.

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