



*Dr Kay Pitkeathly* BVSc

109 Billa Road, Corner Menai Road, Menai NSW 2234

Telephone: (02) 9541 1455 Fax: (02) 9543 1756

[menavet@menavet.com.au](mailto:menavet@menavet.com.au)

## Cat Abscess

An abscess is a lump containing pus (purulent exudate). It is painful. It makes your cat feel sick, often they stop eating and feel miserable and cranky

Abscesses usually occur due to wounds, often from a cat fight, but can be from other injuries such as grass seeds penetrating the skin. Usually there is a small puncture wound on the skin surface, which can be hard to find, but underneath the skin, there is damage and bacteria, which multiply and the wound festers. Often the puncture on the surface will heal quickly but the bacteria underneath thrive in the warm moist hole under the skin and pus forms. Pus is an accumulation of fluid, toxins, living and dead white blood cells, dead tissue and bacteria. It can take as long as 3-5 days for a soft painful swelling to develop.



Cats get very sick from an abscess. Bacteria and toxins and products of dead cells get into the blood and cause septicaemia, spreading infection to other organs in the body.

### SYMPTOMS

If your cat has an abscess they will be in a great deal of pain. Suspect your cat has an abscess if:

- They have stopped eating.
- Your cat may be less active, may sit hunched over for periods of times or may hide.
- Be reluctant to move or play.
- Be reluctant for you to touch them or is in obvious pain when you touch him.
- Warm to touch (indicating your cat may have a fever).
- You notice a lump or hot inflamed area.
- Lameness.
- There is a yellow thick discharge which smells foul.



## **TREATMENT**

If your cat has an abscess, your vet will want to admit them to hospital for day surgery. Your cat will need pain relief and a short anaesthetic so the abscess can be lanced. The abscess is then flushed and explored to remove any pus and any foreign matter (such as a nail, grass seed, hair) from the wound. Your cat will need antibiotics: either a tablet or paste or a long acting injection to treat the infection. If the abscess is deep and nasty, your vet may need to insert a tube (a drain) and suture it in place to get the infection under control. Drains are normally removed after 3-4 days.

Cats recover well as long as the abscess is treated appropriately. If you realise your cat has been in a fight and get into the vet quickly sometimes antibiotics and pain relief are enough without the need for surgery. This obviously costs less so can be a good option for you. It is best to discuss with your vet what will be best for your cat.

