



## CHRONIC SNUFFLERS

This condition **most commonly** occurs **secondary to** a prior **Upper Respiratory Tract Infection**. The most common causes of infection in these cases are the Cat 'Flu' viruses (Herpes or Calicivirus) or Chlamydia. This infection causes **damage** to the **tissue** (mucosa) **and cartilage inside** the **nose**.

Unfortunately, this damage inside the nose is **often permanent** and means your cat has a chance of always having some degree of 'snuffliness'.

### What do we do now?

When a cat presents with a history of snuffles, we like to **take swabs to** see if we can **establish the initial cause** or what's causing the problem now. If the initial cause was a viral infection some years prior, we **may not** be able to **find a specific answer**. It's **important** to try to find out **if** there is a **current problem like a fungal infection or** even a **cancer**.

For the initial cause, we swab around the eyes. This tests to find the DNA of the respiratory viruses and Chlamydia (as mentioned above). These tests are very specific but can still miss the original cause if the disease course has been long.

We sometimes also swab the nasal cavity. This helps find specific causes such as fungal infections. We often find bacterial infections but they are usually secondary to both the original infection and the damage that has been caused inside the nose.

### Are there any other tests?

We can also **radiograph** your cat's **nasal cavity**. This most often tells us the degree of damage that has already been sustained and how congested 'Puss' is but can also give us some indication if there is another disease process (such as fungal infection). A **nasal flush can be performed** at the same time to help tell what the problem is.

Other possibilities are 'rhinoscopy' (an optic fibrescope to explore to nasal cavity) or 'reverse endoscopy' (looking at where the nose ends and the pharynx begins from the mouth). This involves very specialised equipment and so involves a referral.

### Can we treat Chronic Snufflers?

Yes, but in most cases **treatment** is **unlikely to give a long-term cure**. In most cases the **clinical signs can** merely **be controlled**, since the chronically damaged bones cannot be repaired.

**Antibiotics** can be given to reduce secondary bacterial infection. It is usually necessary to give them **for long periods or** as **repeated courses** in order to control the clinical signs. **Other treatments** that can be considered include drugs to **reduce the thickness of the nasal secretions** (mucolytics or decongestants).

Usually, we can manage quite reasonable control (ie occasional sneezes) however your cat is **always at risk of recurrences**.