

# Mouth pain in cats

## Overview

Cats are very good at hiding pain. This was an important skill for their wild ancestors but it makes it difficult to spot signs of a problem in our pet cats.

One of the first signs of a painful mouth tends to be a change in their eating habits. You may even notice your cat hissing or appearing scared of their food.

Make an appointment to see your vet if your cat is showing any signs of mouth pain.

## Signs of mouth pain in cats

If your cat is suffering with a painful mouth, you may see one or more of the following symptoms:

- Eating less or nothing at all
- Shying away from or seeming scared of food
- Bad breath
- Weight loss
- Chewing on one side of the mouth only
- Preferring soft food over biscuits
- Dropping food when eating
- Excessive drooling
- Pawing at the mouth/face
- Swollen face
- Bleeding gums
- Becoming head shy and not wanting to be touched around the face

- Reluctance to groom (matted coat)
- Hiding away

## Causes of mouth pain in cats

### Dental disease

Tooth and gum disease such as tartar build up, wobbly teeth, broken teeth and gingivitis can cause a very sore mouth especially if the inside of the tooth (the sensitive part) is exposed.

### Wounds in the mouth

Wounds inside the mouth can be tricky to spot. Bite injuries from prey your cat has caught (mice and rats for example) are especially common.

### Foreign bodies stuck in the mouth

Something stuck in your cat's mouth or throat such as a bone is often very painful. You may notice your cat pawing at their mouth or face.

### Burns in the mouth

Cats sometimes eat things they shouldn't. This includes hot items and chemicals which can both cause nasty burns to the inside of the mouth.

### Mouth lumps

Cancerous lumps and non-cancerous lumps in the mouth can get infected and sore. When they become large they can get in the way whilst eating.

### Sore throat

Cats get sore throats just like people. They are commonly caused by cat flu but can be caused by other bacterial or viral infections. If your cat has a sore throat you may notice them repeatedly swallowing or gagging.

### **Ulcers**

Mouth ulcers are small painful white lumps on the gums that can be caused by many different diseases including kidney disease.

### **Broken jaw**

Broken jaws can be caused by trauma such as being hit by a car or falling from a height.

## **When to contact your vet**

Make an appointment to see your vet if your cat is showing any of the symptoms above. Mouth pain should always be investigated.

**You know your cat best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.**

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