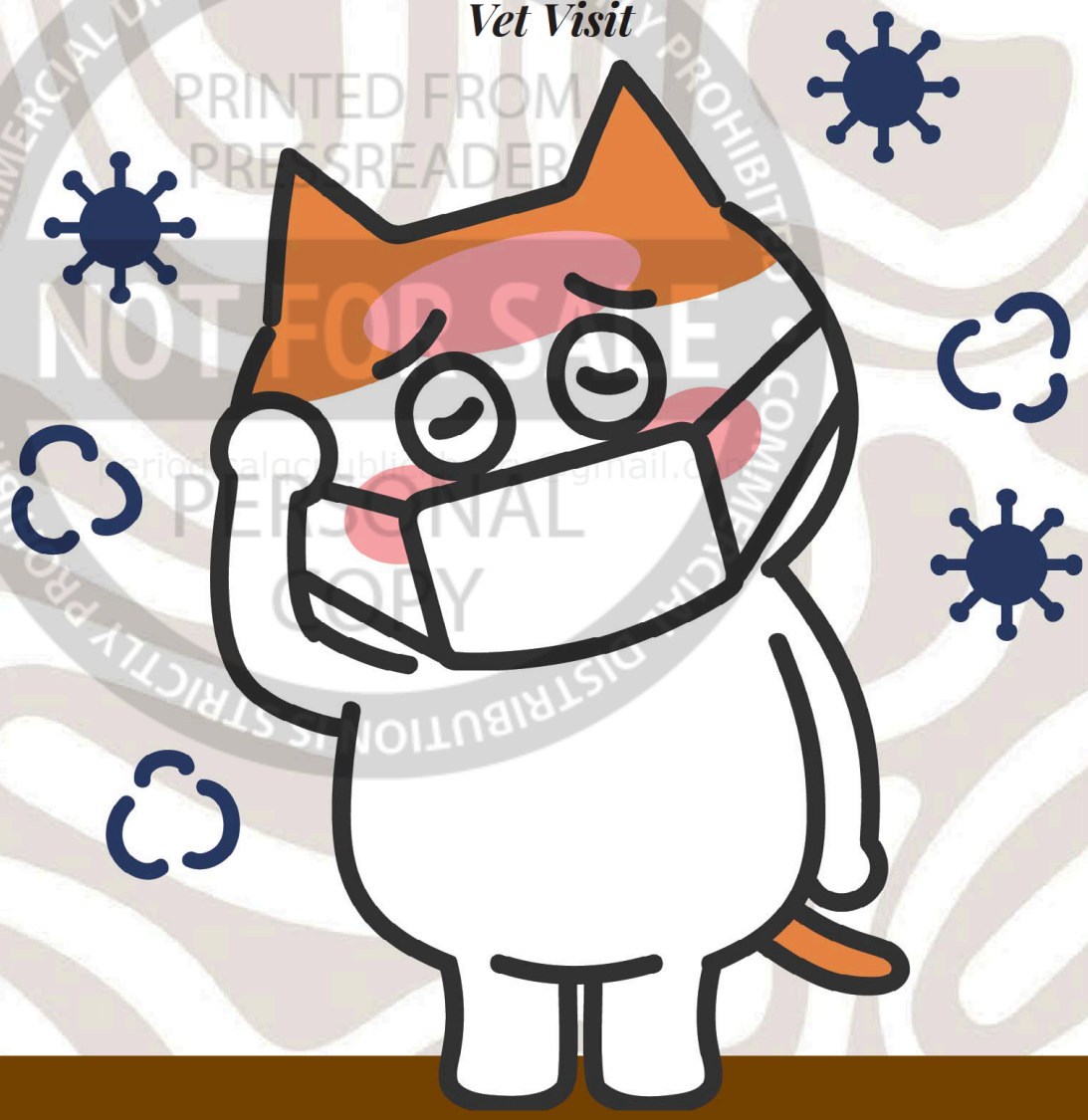
- Cats / Domestic animals

*Vet Visit*



# WHY DOES MY CAT HAVE A COLD?

## ALL ABOUT FELINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE COMPLEX

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**By EMMANUEL D. MACAPAGAL, DVM**

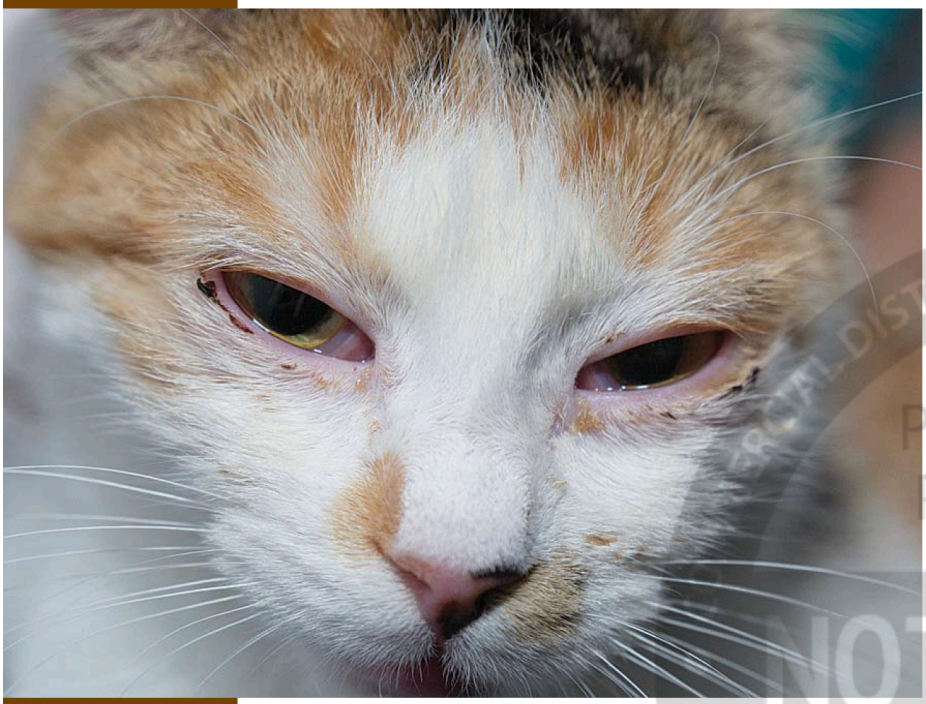
Does your Cat look ill, sneezing and refusing to eat? In case you haven't yet, you might want to bring them to the vet — they might have Feline respiratory disease complex (FRDC).

FRDC is a set of respiratory conditions caused by a group of viruses that can infect a Cat either alone or together. This disease complex usually involves the calicivirus and feline herpesvirus type 1 (which is vastly different from virus that causes a sexually transmitted disease in humans).

## WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS OF FRDC?

With FRDC, they might experience conjunctivitis, excess production of tears, sneezing, inflammation of the nasal passages, and mouth sores. These symptoms could explain why they aren't as happy to finish their food.

In case your Cat already has symptoms, an immediate check-up can help them recover from this illness. It is possible that these symptoms can go away on their own. However, if your Cat isn't vaccinated or is a rescue with a compromised immune system, they should be given proper care and treatment to prevent the worsening of their condition.



Without treatment, they might find it hard to breathe, which means they might need to have oxygen given to them at the vet's clinic. They might also find it hard to eat and drink, which means they could suffer from hunger or water deprivation. They might also get secondary bacterial infections on top of their viral disease, which could complicate matters.



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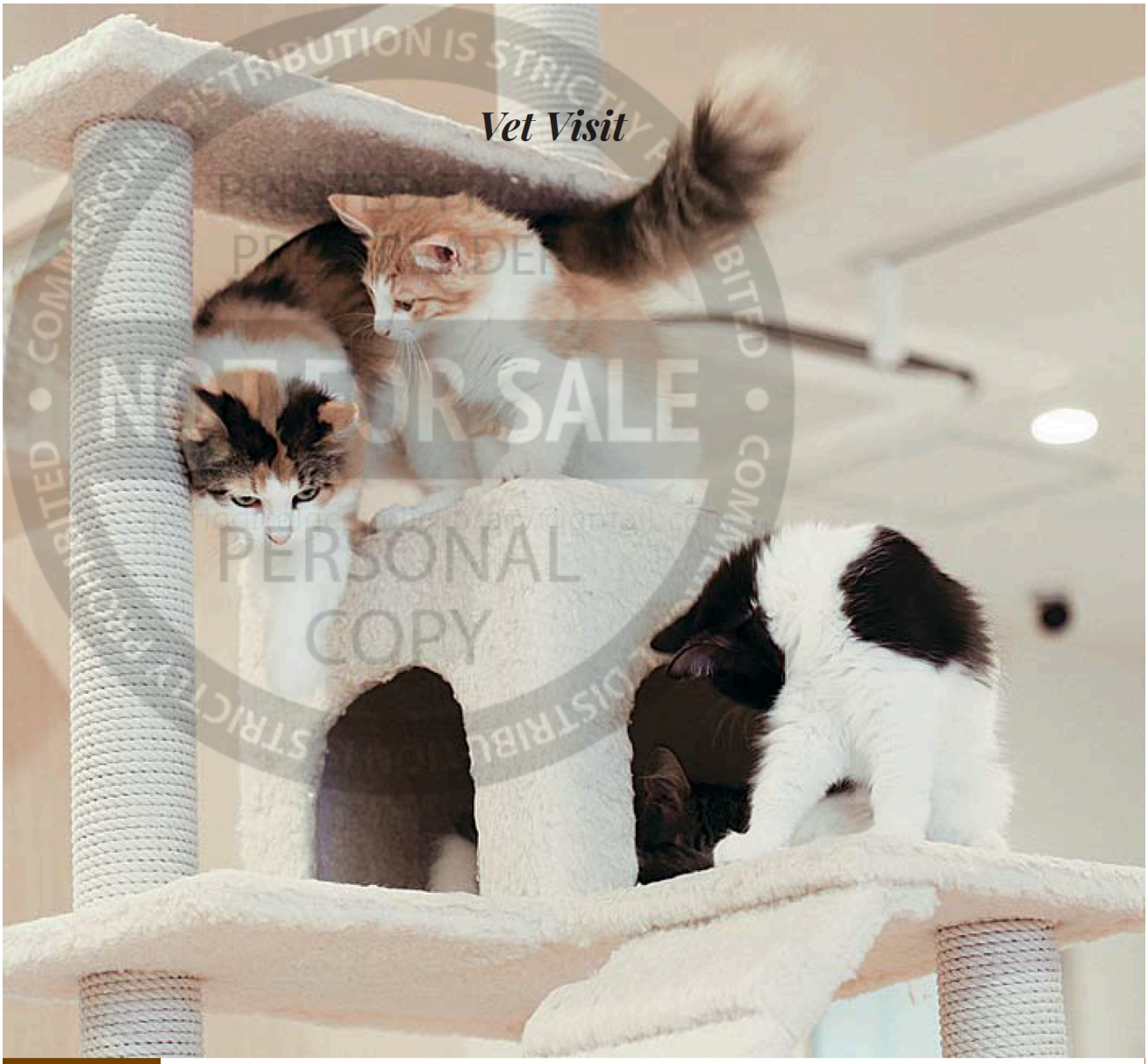

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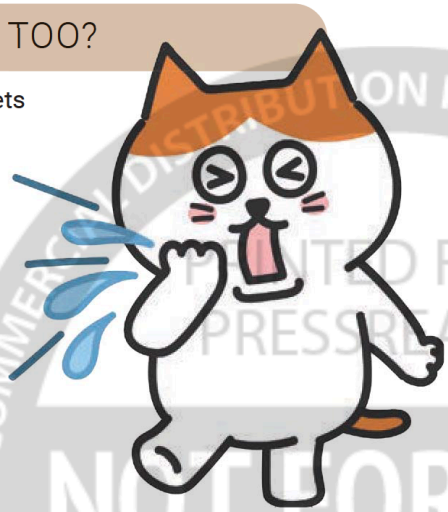
## WILL OTHER CATS GET SICK, TOO?

FRDC can be transmitted via aerosols, droplets (which are bigger than aerosols), and contaminated objects, especially in households with several cats.

With one cat having FRDC, it is possible that an entire home of Cats might get infected as well. But if given proper assistive and supportive treatment in confinement, they have a better chance of recovering.



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## WHAT HAPPENS TO A CAT WITH FRDC?



Feline viral rhinotracheitis, which causes inflammation in the nasal and respiratory passages, might turn bad for your Cat without immunization. It's wiser to immunize against these viruses, so drop by your local animal clinic to have your Cat vaccinated, usually after they have turned three months old. Remember, the smaller the Cat, the faster they get sick.

Because a Cat's nose and throat might be irritated with FRDC, they might refuse to drink. This makes it easier for them to succumb to infection because of dehydration, especially if left untreated.

Recurrent or chronic nasal inflammation may also cause changes to your Cat's nasal structure, further causing repeated bouts of disease. Without vaccination, there are Cats who recover, only for them to go back to the clinic in a couple of months for reconfinement.





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## WILL VACCINATIONS HELP?



As a vet, I can tell you that the cost of having a Cat vaccinated is worth it, compared to the expense of getting a Cat treated for FRDC. I have successfully treated with a modest degree of success.

There is no assurance that this disease will not occur after Cats receive their shots. Then again, vaccinations help ensure that Cats can fight any future or even ongoing infections, which means that if they do get sick, chances are it won't be as serious.

*Dr. Emmanuel D. Macapagal is the 2000-2001 president of the Philippine Animal Hospital Association, Inc.*



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