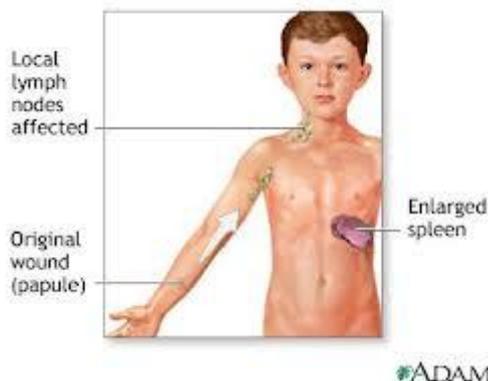


Cat Scratch Disease



What is Cat Scratch Disease?

Cat Scratch Disease is a disease pets may pass onto children or young adults. It is caused by bacteria called *Bartonella henselae* which is passed between cats by fleas and possibly ticks. It is more likely to be present in kittens however they usually only carry the bacteria for a limited time. It is passed onto humans through a cat scratch, or bite, or exposure to cat saliva and initially appears as a minor infection around the wound site approximately 7 to 12 days after the incident. In severe cases it can develop into swelling of the lymph nodes.



What are the signs of infection in our cats?

Cats do not usually display any signs of infection.

What are the signs of infection in our children and young adults?

A mild infection at the injury site normally appears 7 to 12 days after the incident. Symptoms may include slight fever, headaches, chills, backache and swelling of the lymph glands between 5 to 50 days after the scratch or bite.

How do you treat your pet?

As your cat will normally not show any symptoms very few are treated. Contact your Veterinarian for advice.

How do you treat humans?

Seek medical advice if you or your child has any of these symptoms. Diagnostic tests may be needed to exclude other illnesses. Although this is usually a mild illness, antibiotic treatment may be needed. The disease usually resolves by itself in two to four months. Immuno-compromised persons (HIV, poorly treated DM, hepatitis, encephalitis, osteomyelitis and retinitis) may take longer to recover and may need treatment due to lymph node involvement.



How can we prevent it?

- Avoid rough play or any activities which encourage the cat to scratch or bite.
- Don't allow cats to lick open wounds such as scratches.
- Always thoroughly wash all cat bites and scratches with soap and running water.
- Treat your cats regularly with a quality flea treatment.
- Practice good hand washing after handling and playing with cats and kittens.

