

Raw Feeding for IBD Cats

Healing Can Happen!



Nausea in Cats – Includes Slippery Elm Bark Powder Syrup Instructions

Updated 2019

Nausea in cats can be difficult to identify and is often written off as a “picky” or “fussy” kitty. Signs of nausea include (and they may exhibit only one. Not all are “required”):

- Asking for food or appearing to be hungry, but walking away and not eating (often sniffing at the food and then walking away)
- Eating less than usual
- Eating slower than usual
- Needing your presence to eat
- Needing to be hand fed
- Needing encouragement to eat
- Not showing up for the meal
- Lip licking or smacking
- Drooling
- Eating/nibbling on strange things (a pica they normally don’t have)
- Hunched over water dish
- Sitting hunched up in the meatloaf position, but with the head down, eyes may be squinted

Though cats are master manipulators, and kitties that were not exposed to much in the way of different proteins or foods can be picky, what we think of as “pickiness” in a kitty’s eating habits is very often a sign that they don’t feel well. They can become very sensitive to smell, taste, texture, and temperature. ESPECIALLY if you have a kitty that isn’t normally picky, and then becomes picky, consider the problem may be nausea. It can be extremely difficult to identify and is quite insidious. There is simply no harm in treating for nausea in order to rule it out, and we suggest doing just that.

We also do not recommend giving an appetite stimulant without nausea control. How awful would that be, to feel nauseous but having your appetite stimulated?

Physical sign of nausea: the meatloaf. But not all “meatloafs” are nausea. We hope this helps identify the difference.

The Meatloaf Position

The meatloaf position does not by definition mean a kitty is nauseous. Here are pictures (next page) to help illustrate the difference.



The comfy meatloaf – kitty is relaxed



“This is my spot” meatloaf – happens more often in multi-cat homes, but kitty is saying “MINE!” They’re usually sitting on their feet – but head is up, and they’re alert.



The **nauseous meatloaf** – head is down and/or eyes are squinted. One or the other (head down, eyes squinched) is a sign of discomfort, sometimes pain. They may be lip licking or smacking. But they LOOK uncomfortable and/or in pain.



Treating Nausea

There are three potent options: slippery elm bark powder (how to use it for nausea vs diarrhea is addressed here), cerenia and zofran (ondansetron). In CKD cats, acid over-production may warrant Pepcid (generic is famotidine). For a cat with an empty tummy, you may also want to use famotidine short term. But if your cat is not eating at all, PLEASE hand feed or assist feed. It is imperative you get nutrition into your kitty. Cats can easily develop fatty liver disease. We don't want to scare you, but it can cause a cascade of problems, and it can be fatal. It can also be difficult to nurse kitty back to the point of eating on their own without the assistance of tube feeding. Please do NOT be scared of tube feeding, it is very under-utilized in cats and is absolutely life-saving, as discussed by Dr. Lisa Pierson in her article [Feeding Tubes in Cats](#).

On getting meds and assist feeding your cat: [Medicating & Assist Feeding Your Cat](#)

On Slippery Elm: A natural “pepto bismol” (which should never be given to cats as it contains toxic salicylates) is slippery elm bark powder. Instructions are below. Here is information on SEB by Dr. Jean Hofve:

<http://www.littlebigcat.com/health/slippery-elm/>

On Pepcid (Famotidine): Some kitties experience nausea due to acid over-production, though in some kitties, especially if being transitioned to raw, the problem is not enough acid, not too much – even though we're seeing stomach acid pukes. That's usually a meal-timing problem, [discussed here](#). Antacids are over-used, especially in IBD cats, and what many need in the transition is actually a few drops of raw, organic apple cider vinegar in their meals. On the other hand, cats with chronic kidney disease (CKD) do produce too much bile as a part of the disease, so if you

have a kitty with CKD, consider trying an antacid. Tanya's site on Chronic Kidney Disease site has the best information on this: http://www.felinecrf.org/nausea_vomiting_stomach_acid.htm

If you have an IBD kitty that is vomiting, please see [The Problem with Pepcid](#), a 3-part series that also addresses what is fed, how it is fed, and when it is fed; and has a complete review of nausea treatments in cats. If you have an IBD kitty transitioning to raw, or recently transitioned, please refer to the article on managing acid pukes: [How to Manage Acid & Bile Puking](#)

On Cerenia: A prescription anti-emetic medication, cerenia, is generally very effective in controlling nausea. It has anti-inflammatory properties as well as some pain killing power. If you suspect your kitty is nauseous and slippery elm bark powder ("SEB") syrup does not help control it, we suggest discussing cerenia for your cat with your vet.

On Zofran (generic is ondansetron): this is also an effective anti-nausea medication. If SEB or cerenia don't help, request ondansetron. You can use it along with cerenia, or you can use it instead of cerenia. Please note, cerenia has other benefits beyond nausea / vomiting control AND it is only dosed once a day. Ondansetron is typically dosed 2x a day, but may need to be given every 8 hours given its short half-life. Ondansetron can also have the side-effect of constipation. If you have a constipation prone cat, you may want to avoid it, or be on very high alert for bowel movement patterns.

On Appetite Stimulants: If you see improvement with the use of nausea control, but kitty is still not eating well, consider you may also need an appetite stimulant. There are two common stimulants used in cats: cyproheptadine, an anti-histamine, typically very safe and effective. Antihistamines can make kitty groggy. The other commonly prescribed appetite stimulant is mirtazapine. This is an old-line anti-depressant in humans. It can be very effective, vets love it as dosing is typically every-other-day (some vets still use the old dosing schedule of more given every 3 days, but this is riskier, as it is more likely to cause serotonin syndrome in your cat). PLEASE do not give your cat an appetite stimulant without nausea control.

Slippery Elm Bark Syrup Instructions

There are two methods of using slippery elm bark powder for nausea control. Mixing it directly into food is for managing diarrhea. For nausea, it should be given about half an hour before the meal.

Instructions for mixing SEB with George's Aloe Vera Drink. Many do not have access to George's Aloe Vera Drink. Skip to Slippery Elm Bark syrup instructions, below. That said, it is the experience of those who have used both that mixing SEB with the George's aloe is more effective. (Please note, George's is the only one we recommend, it is distilled and has those things that are toxic to cats removed, yet retains its beneficial qualities).

To use SEB with George's aloe vera drink, simply mix 1/8th teaspoon SEB with one-quarter teaspoon of the drink. It gets thick. I use a chopstick to mix until it forms a ball that is basically pea-sized and keeps its shape pretty well. I stick it to the back of the roof of the mouth, and then tip kitty's head up by pushing up under the chin until the cat swallows. Several eat it mixed with tuna juice rather than forming the little ball. You can also mix the 1/8 teaspoon of SEB and 1/4 George's aloe with water, and syringe it into your kitty.

SEB "Syrup"

Bring to a boil then simmer 1 teaspoon of slippery elm bark powder ("SEB") in 1 cup of water, whisking it, for 4 - 5 minutes. It will thicken as it cools. Store it in the fridge for up to 5 days.

You can also put the 1 teaspoon of powder in a microwave safe cup, add 1 cup cold water, stir. Cook on high 30 seconds, stir. Repeat. Then cook on 50% power for 3 – 4 minutes, stirring several times along the way. It will thicken as it cools.

Give kitty 3 – 5ML or one (up to 2) teaspoon 45 minutes to half an hour before a meal to help settle the tummy. You can either mix with water in a small dish to thin it out and then sprinkle something on top to entice them to eat it up, freeze dried meat or liver treats are plain and often do the trick. If you need to use a syringe, the syrup works easily in one. This can be used three – four times a day.