



Dr. Mulder is the owner and medical director of the Pet Hospital, located at 403 Fairview Drive in Brantford. While treating the 'whole' patient, his experience in emergency medicine, nutrition and 20 years as a general practitioner, allows him to lead the team as they serve the client, helping to meet all their pets' needs. This advice column is provided to help loving pet owners to make decisions in the care of their pet. If you have a question for Dr. Mulder, please send an email to [drm Mulder@fairviewpet.ca](mailto:drm Mulder@fairviewpet.ca) or call the Pet Hospital at 519-753-7257.

*Health Care*  
*Isn't Just For Humans!*

## DR. MULDER TALKS PET CARE INDOOR CATS

**Q** Dear Dr. Mulder: I have a 12 year old cat who lives in my house, and since he does not go outside I have not taken him to the vet for 10 years. Recently he started to have runny eyes and was sneezing blood. Is there anything that can be done for him?

**Dr. Mulder:** Indoor cats live a sheltered life especially in a home where they are well cared for and loved. However, a sheltered life does not mean he never gets exposed to common viruses. You many never know how an infectious agent can arrive. The viruses and bacteria that cause upper respiratory infections in cats are extremely contagious. Screened windows, friends with cats or even cat food bags can transport disease into your home. The risk may be low, but when the disease finally comes, you will find out how unprotected he really was. Many people make the mistake of not getting regular examinations and vaccinations for their indoor older cats. Vaccines give long lasting effective protection and regular examinations give early detection and thus the best chance of making an intervention that will extend both the quality and length of his life. Upper respiratory infections may explain your cat's troubles but there are many other factors we need to consider.

Eye problems for the older cat include glaucoma, uveitis and scratches to their eye. When eyes are diseased, cats will hold their eyes halfway shut and produce more tears than normal. Since the tears are drained into the sinuses, sneezing can be a sign. Cats are very particular about their sinuses. I have seen cats go into sneezing fits and end up spraying blood flecks out as they work so hard to clear their passages.

Dental infections can cause the symptoms you describe as well. The tear duct enters the sinuses near the root of the canine teeth (fangs) and if there is a tooth root abscess, it can spread into the sinuses and make its way back to the eyes. Infections and pain of the other teeth can affect the sinuses as well. Have you ever had sensitive teeth with a bad sinus infection?

Your cat may have one of the above diseases alone or there may be an underlying problem too. Older cats are prone to kidney failure, diabetes, thyroid hormone overproduction and long term viral infections similar to AIDS. Any one of these can weaken your cat and make him more susceptible to other diseases.

The best approach for your cat is a veterinary examination and blood testing to find any hidden problems. Treatment can be started now and vaccinations should be considered once he is recovered. The very young and seniors are the ones who suffer the most from the common sicknesses. Even if today's problems are not related to the common viruses, coming to a veterinary hospital removes your cat from that "sheltered" home environment. The last thing we want is to be treating your cat for kidney failure and suddenly have a serious viral infection come along as well!

**Fairview Drive Pet Hospital**

403 Fairview Drive, Brantford, ON N3R 6T2

519-753-7257

[www.fairviewpet.ca](http://www.fairviewpet.ca) email: [info@fairviewpet.ca](mailto:info@fairviewpet.ca)

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