

New Feline Health Research Marks Adopt-a-Cat Month

Morris Animal Foundation program will fund studies on health concerns for shelter cats.

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Morris Animal Foundation's Helping Shelters Help Cats will look into the most common health problems that plague shelter cats. The top concerns for shelter cats are identified as upper respiratory disease, diarrhea and ringworm, according to the Morris Animal Foundation. To recognize the month of June as Adopt-a-Cat Month, MAF has unveiled that its new Helping Shelters Help Cats program plans to fund three feline health research studies.

This new research addresses the most common problems that plague shelter cats by seeking ways to reduce stress and increase adoption rates. Even with treatment, cats may have recurrent outbreaks of upper respiratory infection when under stress, according to MAF.

Helping Shelters Help Cats is part of MAF's Happy Healthy Cat campaign, an effort to raise pet-owner awareness of feline health issues and increase funding for cat health research and scientist training. Funding for the three studies comes from an anonymous donor, who will match every dollar given to this program up to \$500,000, for a potential total of \$1 million.

Researchers will study risk factors that increase disease outbreaks in shelters and ways to improve shelter cat health and comfort. A second team will analyze shelter conditions that lead to emotional stress. In the third study, veterinary scientists will identify ways to increase the safety and comfort of shelter surroundings to improve overall health.