

# Decoding cat vomit

What colors and textures can tell  
you about your pet's health



**Humane World  
for Animals™**

Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States

**If it seems like your cat throws up** more often than your dog, that's because they (probably) do. Cats have more sensitive gastrointestinal systems, and their self-grooming habits mean they can ingest a lot of undigestible fur.

**Sudden, one-time vomiting** is often caused by a hairball, your cat eating something they shouldn't have or an empty stomach (bile and stomach acid can irritate their digestive system and make them vomit a yellow-green, often foamy, liquid).

- Feed your cat a late-night snack (to prevent morning vomiting) or leave out a measured amount of kibble for them to snack on.
- Move any plants that are toxic to cats out of your pet's reach.
- If your cat vomits bile with hairballs, increase their grooming sessions and add small amounts of high-quality digestible fat (such as a fish oil formulation labeled and dosed for cats) to their food.

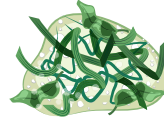
**Vomiting after meals** could indicate that your cat is eating too fast.

- Offer smaller, more frequent meals or spread your cat's food over the surface of a plate so they have to take smaller mouthfuls.
- Switch to food with different, more limited ingredients.

**See the vet** if your cat experiences any of the following:

- Chronic vomiting, which is repeated vomiting either several times in row or over days or months (can be a sign of intestinal blockage or other GI issues, parasites, allergies, or diseases such as kidney disease, liver disease or hyperthyroidism)
- Potential toxin exposure, loss of appetite or constipation
- Reddish or bloody vomit (can signal a potential injury in the mouth, esophagus or stomach or that your cat has eaten a foreign object)
- Dark brown or black coffee-grounds-textured vomit (may indicate bleeding in the upper GI tract)

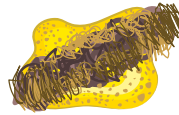
Learn more at [humaneworld.org/catvomit101](https://humaneworld.org/catvomit101).



**Green with bits**  
Plants (ate plant material)



**Green or yellow**  
Bile (prolonged empty stomach)



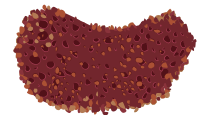
**Clear or yellow with hair clumps**  
Hairball (if chronic, may need grooming help)



**Red, pink**  
Blood (internal bleeding, medical emergency)



**Brown with undigested chunks**  
Regurgitation of food or other ingested substance (ate too fast)



**Brown with coffee ground texture**  
Blood (internal bleeding, medical emergency)



**Clear**  
Water (if chronic, potential diabetes)



**White, foamy**  
Stomach irritation (if chronic, potential infection or allergy)



**Clear with spaghetti-like texture**  
Roundworm parasite (needs anti-parasitic medication)