

Is it OK to house a parvo puppy for treatment in the same isolation room as a kitten with feline URI syndrome?

In this FAQ, Dr. Aziz explains why the co-housing of multiple species in any facility should be avoided, regardless of health status.

Question:

Is it Ok to house a parvo puppy for treatment in the same isolation room as a kitten with feline URI syndrome? With parvo making the puppy immuno-compromised, is it possible for the puppy to get Bordetella or other infection from kitten?

Response:

Thank you for writing in. Although you have mentioned that your facility is a veterinary clinic and not a shelter, the primary factors you are concerned with, namely stress and infectious disease transmission, play the same roles in animals regardless of facility type.

[The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' \(ASV\) 2010 Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#) specifically states that animals should be separated by species on shelter intake and housed separately. Similarly, the [American Association of Feline Practitioners \(AAFP\)/AAHA 2010 Feline Life Stage Guidelines](#) states that hospitalized cats should be housed away from dogs.

As you have referred to, transmission of infectious disease between species is one of the reasons behind these guidelines. Cats and dogs share the same strains of Bordetella, and it has been shown that strains that affect cats can be passed to dogs and vice versa. So, the URI kitten, if infected with Bordetella, certainly could transmit and cause disease, particularly in an immunocompromised puppy. Bear in mind, though, that both healthy animals, as well as animals with URI, can harbor Bordetella that can be transmitted to each other. Accordingly, separating cats and dogs at all times is important, regardless of health status.

Keep in mind, also, that panleukopenia is a parvovirus, and that there

have been documented cases of canine parvovirus strains causing infection in cats, resulting in clinical panleukopenia disease. It has also been shown that cats can transmit panleukopenia to dogs – another important reason to separate the two species.

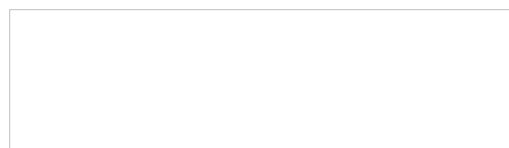
However, the primary reason behind the above mentioned guidelines is to uphold animal well-being by limiting exposure to obvious stressors. Cats should always be housed separately from dogs, because they can be profoundly stressed by the sight and sound of dogs. Stress has many adverse effects on an animal, including reducing an animal's ability to resist infectious disease.

Stress, strongly associated with activating herpesvirus, is the primary culprit driving shelter URI. It is a strong driver of feline URI in private practice, as well. The kitten's ability to recover from URI will be greatly inhibited by the stress of being housed in the same ward as a puppy, even one that may be less active and bark-y due to parvovirus.

Although we have not historically done a great job of separating species in clinics and hospitals, our profession is moving towards observing more cat-friendly practices, which will allow us to provide an even better level of care for the animals we all love. I hope this reply helps.

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