

Cat fight wounds present in many ways hence it is important that the terminology is defined clearly and used consistently.

Cat fight scratches:

- Typically superficial these can become inflamed and develop infection but in most cases no or topical treatment is appropriate. Cat scratch disease (Bartonellosis) is very rarely transmitted from cat-cat during fighting.

Cat fight puncture wound:

- A cat fight wound begins as a small puncture made by the teeth of another cat. A cat's mouth harbours large amounts of bacteria (including *Pasteurella multocida*).
- Initial Appearance: These wounds often look small and insignificant on the surface, or may be hidden by fur, making them hard to spot immediately after a fight.
- Pathology: The skin wound then sometimes heals over the tiny entry point, which can in some cases seal the bacteria deep within the underlying tissues leading to an abscess (see below) or cause localised cellulitis.
- Clinical Signs: In the immediate aftermath, there may be little to no obvious sign of injury, though the area might be tender, enlarged or warm to the touch.

Cat Bite Abscess

- A cat bite abscess develops a few days after an initial puncture wound
- Development: White blood cells collect at the infection site, causing the diseased tissue to liquefy into pus. This accumulation of pus forms a painful, fluid-filled pocket or lump under the skin.
- Clinical Signs: Signs often become much more apparent and severe at this stage and can include:

- Significant swelling and pain at the site if the abscess has not burst.
- Limping (if the wound is on a limb).
- Lethargy, loss of appetite, and fever (pyrexia / raised body temperature)
- If the abscess has already burst and started to drain – a foul smelling fluid may be seen.

In summary: The cat fight wound is the initial, sometimes subtle, injury and entry point for bacteria. This can sometimes lead to a subsequent abscess which develops when those introduced bacteria are trapped in the tissues.