Sneezes and Sniffles

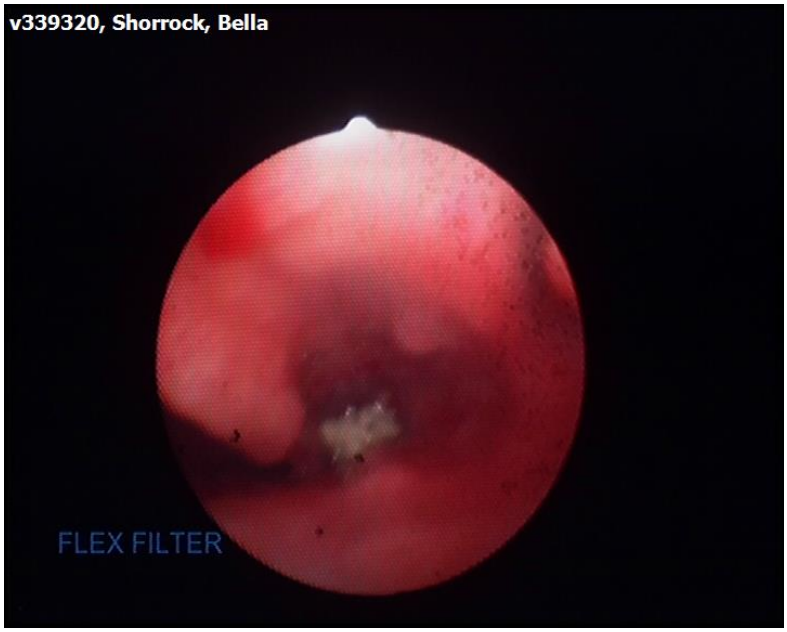
Just like us, it is normal for a dog or cat to sneeze here and there.

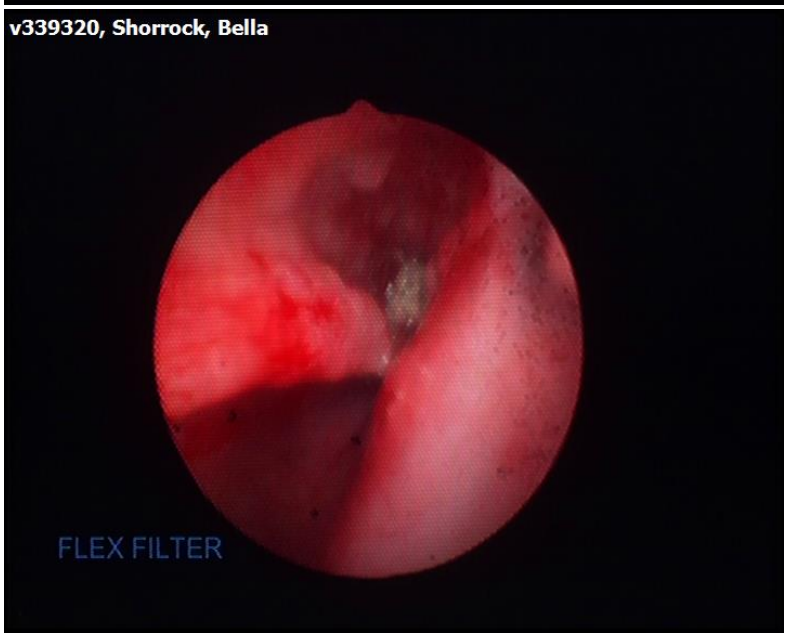
Sometimes you might notice that your pet start sneezing more often, gets a runny nose, sounds sniffly or even obsessively licks their nose. If they sneeze for a day or 2 and it goes away, it was likely just an irritant, allergy or infection such as a virus. However, if the sneezing continues, they definitely need to see a vet. It could be caused by an infection (bacterial, viral, fungal or parasitic), an allergy, a foreign body stuck in the nose or a cancerous mass.

During the consultation, we will listen to their lungs and upper airways, examine their nose to assess discharge and air flow, check for pain and structural changes and look in their mouth to see whether a tooth root infection is the cause. If we can't find anything concerning, we will often trial some antihistamines or anti-inflammatories to see whether it helps. If those don't help, that's when we need to consider a full diagnostic investigation.

Bella is a gorgeous 10 year old Miniature Schnauzer who presented for ongoing nose licking and sniffling. It became quite obsessive and after no relief with antihistamines, we saw a big ball of snot coming from her nostril one day while she was being groomed. We were able to take a swab of the discharge, send it to a pathologist and diagnosed a Staphylococcus bacterial infection. However, when antibiotics didn't completely resolve the infection, we knew there must have been something within the nose, hiding some of the bacteria.

We anaesthetised Bella to have a look upper her nose and at the back of her nostrils. We did this by passing a small scope with a camera on the end. At the back of her left nostril, we found a piece of foreign material. Although we treated her with the correct antibiotics, the bacteria easily hide within the foreign material and make it difficult to kill any infection completely. We don't know how long the foreign body was sitting in the back of Bella's nose but it was some kind of boney material that got stuck there.





Bella recovered really well from the anaesthetic and went home the following day with a much clearer nose and is going well.

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