

INHERITANCE PATTERN OF DEAFNESS IN WHITE-COATED CATS

Q: What is known about the inheritance of deafness in white-coated, blue-eyed cats (particulary Persians)?—M., Virginia.

A: Deafness in white-colored cats appears to be a recessive inherited trait which is not sex-linked. In cats, unlike most other animals, white is dominant to all other colors. Regardless of the second cat's color, offspring of a purebred white cat are always white. They will carry genes for other colors, however. In such unpure individuals "white spotting" (with the dominant white factor) around the eye is associated with the blue eyes. Deafness is most common in these animals. "White spotting" may continue around the ears and be related to deafness. This may explain why odd-eyed (heterochromic) cats are

often deaf only on the side of the blue eye. Deafness is related to anomalies of the organ of Corti.—J. E. Whitehead, VMD, ASPCA Hospital and Clinic, New York City.

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