

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

What is Feline Immunodeficiency Virus?

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that causes immune deficiency in the cat. FIV attacks and causes dysfunction of the immune system. The prevalence of FIV is estimated to be 3 % in healthy cats and 9-15% in cats exhibiting signs of clinical illness.

How do cats get Feline Immunodeficiency Virus?

Most cats becoming infected with FIV when they are bitten by an infected cat. Less common routes of transmission are from an infected mother to her kittens and sexual transmission. Casual FIV transmission is caused sharing bowls, litter boxes, and mutual grooming although rare, must be considered.

How do I know if my cat has this disease?

A simple blood test done by your veterinarian will give you quick accurate results. This test detects FIV and/or Feline Leukemia Virus, which is a similar virus (see reverse side of handout for more information on Feline Leukemia).

How can I protect my cat from this disease?

~~Unfortunately, there is no vaccine to protect cats~~ Unfortunately, there is no vaccine to protect cats against FIV infection. The best way to keep your cat safe is to make sure they are never exposed to an FIV-positive cat. Keep your cat indoors and test any new cats before coming into your home.

Note: Humans cannot contract FIV. Only felines appear to be susceptible.

What happens to my cat if they get Feline Immunodeficiency Virus?

FIV infection progresses slowly, often with a long interval between exposure and onset of disease. ~~All body systems can be affected as a result of immunosuppression.~~ All body systems can be affected as a result of immunosuppression. Examples: Upper respiratory infection, neurological disease, skin and ear infection, cancer of an organs, etc.

