

Feline Infectious Peritonitis

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Overview

Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) is a progressive and ultimately fatal disease of cats caused by a coronavirus. Many cats are infected with a relatively benign form of the coronavirus but only in certain cats will the virus mutate to become pathologic (FIP).

Previously, it was suggested that cats could transmit the disease to other cats by saliva, urine, and feces. It was also suggested that multi-cat households may increase the risk of disease. Cats living with an FIP cat will be no more likely to have this mutation in the future than they otherwise would have been not being exposed to the FIP cat.

There are two forms of the disease: effusive and non-effusive. The characteristic sign of the effusive form is the accumulation of fluid in the chest or abdomen. The non-effusive form is more difficult to diagnose and is characterized by weight loss, depression and fever.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Feline infectious peritonitis is difficult to diagnose. Blood work, including an FIP titer (serum antibody test). This test will identify exposure to any coronavirus and is not specific to FIP. If the cat has the effusive form of disease, analysis of the fluid can help confirm the diagnosis. The non-effusive form is more difficult to diagnose.
- Treatment depends on the disease process, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Dehydrated cats are treated with either subcutaneous or intravenous fluids. Some cats can benefit from cortisone. Antibiotics are used to treat infections. Nutritional support is important in maintaining health. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Fever
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Jaundice (yellow color of the skin, eyes, ears, nose or gums)
- Pale gums
- Distended abdomen (in effusive FIP)
- Difficulty breathing (from fluid accumulation in the chest)

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*