

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

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Overview

Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is a viral infection that attacks the immune system of cats. It is a retrovirus similar to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and a syndrome similar to AIDS occurs in cats. Affected cats may have a variety of symptoms including infections caused by a poorly functioning immune system, anemia and low blood-cell counts, infections of the gums and mouth, cancer or neurologic disease.

FIV is not contagious to people; it is an infectious disease spread from cat to cat, primarily by biting. FIV has been found in the mother's milk and can be transmitted from mother to kitten. Transmission among household cats through normal contact is thought to be unlikely. Outdoor and male cats are predisposed.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- FIV is diagnosed through blood tests such as an ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay), IFA (indirect immunofluorescence) or Western blot test. Cats that have been vaccinated for FIV will have positive test results. For this reason, only unvaccinated cats should be tested.
- Treatment depends on the disease process, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections. Nutritional support is important to maintain health. Masses may be biopsied and surgically removed. Affected cats should be kept indoors to prevent spread of the virus. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Chronic infections
- Non-healing wounds
- Lethargy
- Weakness
- Loss of appetite

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

