

# FeLV in Cats

What does FeLV stand for?

Feline Leukemia Virus

What is FeLV?

FeLV is a common virus and widespread throughout the cat population. It most commonly occurs through close and social contact amongst cats and kittens are especially susceptible. FeLV compromises a cat's immune system and leaves them vulnerable to other diseases.

Transmission

The virus is highly shed via saliva but is also shed via blood, urine, feces, nasal secretions and milk. Sharing bowls and litter boxes, as well as mutual grooming and bites are all methods of transmission for FeLV.

Pregnant mom cats who are FeLV positive may also transmit the disease to their fetuses in utero or via nursing.

Diagnosis

The most common way of diagnosis is via blood test. FAMM offers an FIV/FeLV combo test at cost for \$20 per cat. If the results are positive, it is still recommended to retest the cat 90 days after suspected exposure as confirmation. Test results for cats under 6 months of age could be false due to the nature of retrovirus stages. It is recommended to retest kittens 90 days after suspected exposure.

Treatment/Management

There is no current treatment for the disease and management should be done so under the supervision and guidance of the cat's veterinarian. It is recommended FeLV positive cats are examined by their veterinarian (1-2 times a year or more) regularly for best options of supportive care.

Note on Prognosis

Prognosis is highly variable and dependent on the individual cat. A small percentage of FeLV-positive cats may remain healthy for several years, but the prognosis for persistently FeLV-positive cats is poor, as most of the infected cats living within cluster households will die within three years from the time of diagnosis.

# FIV in Cats

What does FIV stand for?

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

What is FIV?

FIV is one of the most common infectious diseases of cats around the world. FIV causes suppression of the immune system and could leave a cat vulnerable to other diseases such as upper respiratory infection and common parasites.

Transmission

The primary mode of transmission for FIV is through bite wounds from an infected cat. Cats cannot pick up the disease by sharing water bowls, mutual grooming, or any other casual, non-aggressive contact. Cats in households with stable social structures where housemates do not fight are at little risk of ever acquiring FIV.

Only on rare occasions may an infected mother cat transmit the infection to her kittens. However, if a mother cat becomes infected during pregnancy, the transmission risk to her offspring is increased.

Sexual contact is not a significant means of transmission.

Diagnosis

The most common way of diagnosis is via blood test. FAMM offers an FIV/FeLV combo test at cost for \$20 per cat. If the results are positive, it is still recommended to retest the cat in 60 days or at 6 months old (whichever comes first) as confirmation. Cats under 6 months of age can test positive due to antibodies from their mother cat.

Treatment/Management

There is no cure for FIV so management is very important. FIV cats commonly live average life spans as long as they are not also infected with FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus). It is recommended that FIV positive cats are examined by their veterinarian 1-2 times yearly.

Keeping FIV positive cats indoors helps to protect them from other immunocompromising diseases and conditions such as FeLV, upper respiratory infection, and common parasites. It is also important to keep an FIV positive cat up to date on core vaccinations and preventatives. Immunity-boosting supplements may be recommended but a veterinarian should be consulted for best options.

<https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-treatment-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-immunodeficiency-virus-fiv>

<https://veterinaryworld.org/Vol.13/April2018/1951851951813>