

***Feline Aids
and
Feline Leukemia
What you need to know!***

So...what are these diseases?

Feline Aids (or Feline Immunodeficiency Virus..FIV) is the cat version of human HIV. (It is not contagious to people.)

Feline Aids (FIV) is typically spread from cat to cat when they fight or "play bite". Cats that have not been fixed are more at risk because of their higher chance of exposure.

Feline Leukemia is a virus that attacks the blood cells and other organs of the body.

Feline Leukemia is spread by biting and through contact with infected saliva and urine. Infected moms can give birth to infected kittens.

Both of these diseases are major causes of illness and death in cats.

Many cats can have either one of these viruses and look perfectly healthy on the outside!

What do these viruses do?

Both of these viruses affect cats by interfering with their immune...or "INFECTION FIGHTING" system...Cats with one of these viruses have a very difficult time fighting off infections that healthy cats don't have a problem with.

Some early signs of these diseases may be:

- *decreased appetite
- *decreased grooming
- *decreased energy

Later signs may include:

- *no appetite
- *weight loss
- *weakness
- *pale gums
- *mouth sores, abscesses, and infections
- *Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- *enlarged lymph nodes

How do I find out if my cat has one of these diseases?

A simple blood test is used to check cats for these viruses. This test can be performed in the hospital and results are known within minutes.

When should my cat be tested?

FIV and Leukemia testing is important in the following situations:

- *Before you bring a new cat into the household
- *Before your cat's first Feline Leukemia vaccination
- *If your cat is sick...even if he or she may have tested free of infection in the past
- *If your cat has been exposed to an infected cat
- *If your cat has unknown exposure to cats that may be infected
- *If your cat has never been tested before

What can I do to protect my cat from these diseases?

Fortunately there is a vaccination against Feline Leukemia. This vaccination can be started as early as 9 weeks of age. The vaccine is boosted 3 weeks after the first shot and is then given once a year.

There is no vaccination against Feline Aids (FIV) yet... our best protection against this deadly virus is to reduce exposure. You can help prevent exposure by...

- *Not allowing any contact with stray or other cats that may have FIV or Feline Leukemia
- *Housing your cat indoors only
- *Spaying or neutering your cat as soon as possible.
- *Testing cats as recommended to prevent spreading the disease.

Please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns about these diseases...we are here to help!

Thank you for allowing us to care for your special family members!