

FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (FIV) FACT SHEET

Feline AIDS is caused by infections with Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). It is a viral disease which affects the immune system of cats, and can be potentially fatal. It is important to have your cat vaccinated against FIV from their very first immunisations as a kitten



What is FIV?

FIV destroys the immune system and leaves the cat extremely susceptible to infections and diseases. As the disease progresses, eventually the immune system will become too weak to fight off other infections, and as a result this eventually leads to death.

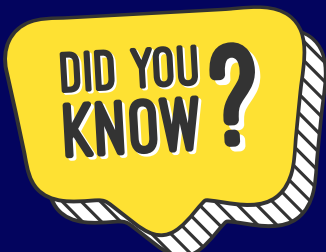
Common Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Diarrhoea
- Swollen lymph nodes

How is it spread?

FIV is most commonly spread through saliva when biting occurs during cat fights. It can also be transmitted by a mother cat to her kittens across the placenta or through her milk.

Although FIV is related to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes human AIDs, no human has ever been reported to be infected with FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus).



FIV is primarily spread through deep bite wounds, so outdoor and unneutered cats are at higher risk. Despite the virus, many FIV-positive cats remain healthy for years with a stress-free environment and routine veterinary care.



Bite wounds are a common transmission route of FIV

Can it be cured?

Unfortunately, there has been no successful treatment for FIV infections. The best that can be done is to be vigilant in watching for any signs of illness in a cat who has FIV and have each infection treated as they develop.

How to care for your Cat if they have FIV?

It is important to keep your cat indoors at all times, and limit your cats exposure to other cats in order to reduce the risk of catching any infection that their immune system will be unable to fight. If there are other cats in your household, have them tested for FIV and ensure that they are vaccinated against it. If your cats live together peacefully and do not fight, it is unlikely to spread to your other cat.

How to prevent FIV

- Ensure kittens receive their full vaccination schedule. The FIV Vaccination usually consists of an initial course of 3 vaccinations done 2-4 weeks apart, followed by a yearly booster every year of life.
- Ensure the yearly booster is done regardless of your cats age or if they are indoor or outdoor cats.
- Always keep your cats indoors or in secure outdoor play areas.

Summary of Points:

- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a potentially fatal disease that interferes with the immune system
- FIV leads to Feline AIDS
- It is similar to humans infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) but it is not the same virus
- All cats should be vaccinated against FIV

FIV Positive cats should be kept separate from other cats in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

For more information, contact the Pet Industry Association Australia by emailing us at info@piaa.org.au

