

FIV: UNDERSTANDING FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

CAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION • PET PARENT SERIES

FIV is a virus that affects a cat's immune system. FIV-positive cats may remain healthy for years and can have a good quality of life with appropriate care.

HOW DOES FIV SPREAD?

FIV is spread primarily through deep bite wounds from an infected cat. Cats that roam outdoors and fight are at greater risk.

Casual contact—such as sharing bowls, grooming, or peacefully living together—is not considered an efficient way FIV spreads.

FIV does not infect people.

TESTING: FIV is commonly screened for with a blood test that detects antibodies.

Testing may be recommended for:

- Newly adopted or untested cats
- Cats with outdoor access or bite wounds
- Cats exposed to an FIV-positive cat
- Cats with unexplained illness

Recent exposure, positive results, or testing in young kittens may require follow-up testing.

CARING FOR AN FIV+ CAT

- Keep indoors and reduce exposure to fighting
- Maintain regular veterinary & dental care
- Feed a complete, balanced diet
- Monitor weight, appetite, behavior & overall health
- Have illness evaluated promptly

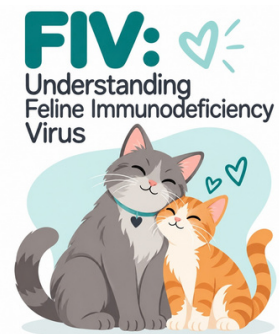
There is no definitive cure for FIV, but good preventive care and prompt treatment of illness can help protect long-term health.

PREVENTION

Preventing bite wounds is one of the best ways to reduce FIV transmission. There is currently no commercially available FIV vaccine in North America.

REMEMBER

FIV-positive does not mean hopeless. Many FIV-positive cats can live healthy lives for years. Work with your veterinarian to confirm test results and develop an individualized care plan.



References: Cornell Feline Health Center • AAFP Feline Retrovirus Guidelines

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